

COVID-19 fears fading

As omicron fades away, so do Americans' fears about the pandemic. **News, Page 5**

Australia hit by floods

Australia's southeast coast inundated with its worst flooding since 2011. **News, Page 4**

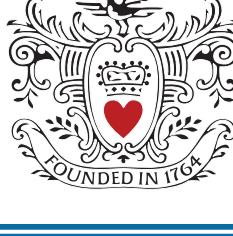
Baseball labor talks fail

Owners, players fail to reach deal, forcing Opening Day to be canceled. **Sports, Page 1**

Mild afternoon

Partly sunny and seasonable; high of 43. **Sports, Page 6**

Hartford Courant



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"I'm urging people to stay. ... We're going to be raising wages under the labor agreement that we'll be announcing in the next couple of weeks, including some bonus incentives. Doing everything we can to keep people here or take a job in state government because we need you." — Gov. Ned Lamont, on pay hikes to keep veteran state employees

Some state workers get raises

With nearly 1K public employees already retired this year, Lamont pulls out incentives to stay

By Christopher Keating

Hartford Courant

NEW BRITAIN — Facing a potential wave of retirements, Gov. Ned Lamont said Tuesday that the

state will be offering pay raises and bonuses in an attempt to keep veteran state employees.

The move is being made because thousands of state employees are expected to retire before July 1

— the key date when changes in pension and health benefits will begin as cost-saving measures for the state. Employees who retire before that date will keep their more-lucrative benefits that they currently have.

"I'm urging people to stay," Lamont said when asked by the Courant. "We're going to have a

slight incentive to incent people to stay. I'm not looking for people to wholesale retire."

He added, "We're going to be raising wages under the labor agreement that we'll be announcing in the next couple of weeks, including some bonus incentives. Doing everything we can to keep people here or take a job in state

government because we need you."

Lamont is also making moves so that employees have the proper expertise in important positions.

"We're training people in the skills we need, especially in IT and coding," Lamont said. "We have needs."

Turn to Raises, Page 3



MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

WAR IN UKRAINE

LIT IN SOLIDARITY



SERHII NUZHnenko/AP

TOP: Lights above The Hartford Tower in downtown Hartford are illuminated blue and yellow, "in solidarity with Ukraine," the company says, through the weekend. Additionally, The Hartford is matching employee donations to humanitarian nonprofits at 100%.

LEFT: Women walk past the remains of a Russian military vehicle in Bucha, close to the capital of Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. Russia has stepped up shelling of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, pounding civilian targets there. Casualties mounted and reports emerged that more than 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed after Russian artillery hit a military base in Okhtyrka, a city between Kharkiv and Kyiv, the capital.

FULL COVERAGE ON NEWS, PAGE 4

STATE OF THE UNION

Ukraine, domestic plans top speech

Biden also addresses gains made against virus from year ago

By Zeke Miller and Colleen Long
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Addressing a concerned nation and anxious world, President Joe Biden vowed in his first State of the Union address Tuesday night to check Russian aggression in Ukraine, tame soaring U.S. inflation at home and deal with the fading but still dangerous coronavirus.

He asked the lawmakers crowding the House chamber to stand and salute the Ukrainians as he began his speech. They stood and cheered.

Biden, in remarks before Congress, highlighted the bravery of Ukrainian defenders and the resolve of a newly reinvigorated Western alliance that has worked to rearm the Ukrainian military and cripple Russia's economy through sanctions. He warned of costs to the American economy, as well, but warned ominously that without consequences, Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression wouldn't be contained to Ukraine.

"Throughout our history we've learned this lesson — when dictators do not pay a price for their aggression, they cause more chaos," Biden said. "They keep moving. And, the costs and threats to America and the world keep rising."

But it has taken on new significance with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and nuclear saber-rattling by Vladimir Putin.

Vowing that Putin would "pay a price" for invading Ukraine, Biden recounted U.S. and allied economic sanctions against Russia and announced

Turn to Speech, Page 2

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Bill would ban higher costs for women's goods, services

By Daniela Altomari

Hartford Courant

State lawmakers are proposing legislation that bans gender-based pricing on everything from razors to bike helmets, saying the practice is discriminatory and costs women an average of \$1,500 a year.

"Women should not pay more for goods and services simply because they are women," said Sen. Derek Slap, a West Hartford Democrat and the bill's chief sponsor, during a public hearing Tues-

day before the legislature's general law committee. "If we agree with that premise, then the question is how do we get there? Because there's been ample evidence that shows that women do pay this gender tax."

It's often called the "pink tax," although it's not really a tax but rather an up-charge that is placed on products and services used by women. A 2015 study by the New York Department of Consumer

Turn to Costs, Page 3

Study: Taxes hit poor, middle class harder

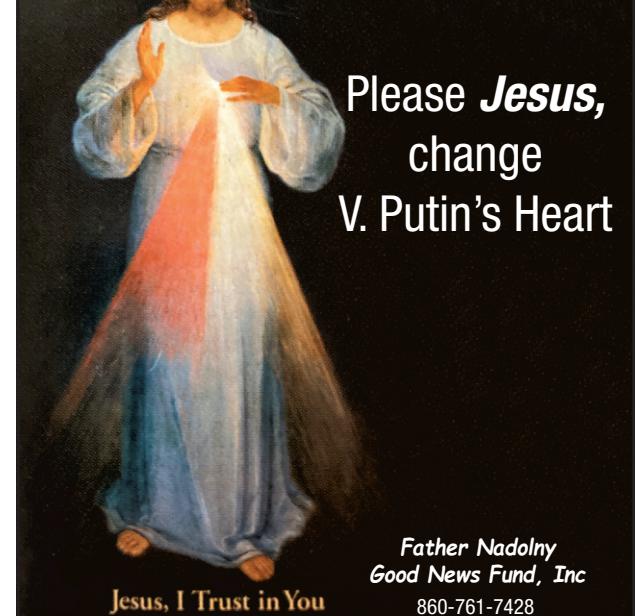
Connecticut's state and municipal tax systems hammer the poor and middle classes — likely more heavily than they did a decade ago — according to a new study released on Monday. But while the latest tax fairness analysis shows working families facing even higher effective tax rates, the damage could be understated, and it could put pressure on Gov. Ned Lamont and the General Assembly to redistribute tax burdens. **Connecticut, Page 1**

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FROM PAGE ONE

"We have a choice. One way to fight inflation is to drive down wages and make Americans poorer. I have a better plan to fight inflation. Lower your costs, not your wages." — President Joe Biden

Speech

from Page 1

that the U.S. is following Canada and the European Union in banning Russian planes from its airspace.

Biden used his first remarks to highlight the bravery of Ukrainian defenders and praise President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for his resolve.

Biden spoke with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy by phone a few hours before his speech at the Capitol.

In an interview with CNN and Reuters, Zelenskyy said he urged Biden to deliver a strong and "useful" message about Russia's invasion.

Even before the Russian invasion sent energy costs skyrocketing, prices for American families had been rising, and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to hurt families and the country's economy.

Biden was outlining plans to address inflation by reinvesting in American manufacturing capacity, speeding supply chains and reducing the burden of childcare and eldercare on workers.

"We have a choice," Biden said. "One way to fight inflation is to drive down wages and make Americans poorer. I have a better plan to fight inflation. Lower your costs, not your wages."

Biden entered the House chamber without a mask, in a reflection of the declining coronavirus case counts and new federal guidance meant to nudge the public back to pre-pandemic activities.

But the Capitol was newly fenced due to security concerns after last year's insurrection.

The White House had conceived Tuesday night's State of the Union as an opportunity to highlight the improving coronavirus outlook in the country, rebrand Biden's domestic policy priorities and show a



President Biden delivers the State of the Union address Tuesday night during a joint session of Congress. **JIM LO SCALZO/EPA**

path to lower costs for families grappling with soaring inflation.

Biden spoke to an American public that is frustrated with his performance.

A February AP-NORC poll found that more people disapproved than approved of how Biden is handling his job, 55% to 44%. That's down from a 60% favorable rating last July.

But it has taken on new significance with last week's Russian invasion of Ukraine

and nuclear saber-rattling by Putin.

And while the geopolitical crisis in Eastern Europe may have helped to cool partisan tensions in Washington, it can't erase the political and cultural discord that is casting doubt on Biden's ability to deliver on his pledge to promote national unity.

Biden is speaking to an American public that is frustrated with his performance.

White House officials acknowledge the mood of the country is "sour," citing the lingering pandemic and inflation.

Biden highlighted progress from a year ago — with the majority of the U.S. population now vaccinated and millions more people at work — but also acknowledge that the job is not yet done, a recognition of American discontent.

Biden aides say they believe the national psyche

is a "trailing indicator" that will improve with time.

But time is running short for the president, who needs to salvage his first-term agenda to revive the political fortunes of his party before November's midterm elections.

House Republicans say the word "crisis" describes the state of the union under Biden and Democrats — from an energy policy that lets Russia sell oil abroad to challenges at home over

jobs and immigration.

"We're going to push the president to do the right thing," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.

At least a half-dozen lawmakers, including Reps. Jamie Raskin and Pete Aguilar, both members of the committee investigating last year's Capitol riot, and Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., had tested positive for COVID-19 and were not expected at the Capitol for the speech.

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**BREAKING NEWS**

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LOTTERY

Tuesday, March 1

PLAY3 DAY **7 3 1 WB: 3** **PLAY4 DAY** **1 4 4 4 WB: 8**

The late lotto numbers were not drawn in time for this edition. For results, please visit courant.com/lottery.

MONDAY'S LATE NUMBERS

PLAY3 NIGHT **3 6 8 WB: 4**
PLAY4 NIGHT **5 3 2 0 WB: 8**

CASH 5 **5 8 10 17 33**
LUCKY FOR LIFE **3 26 29 30 35 LB: 15**

Friday's est. Lotto jackpot: \$1.2 million

Tonight's est. Powerball jackpot: \$73 million

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FROM PAGE ONE



Senate Minority Leader Kevin Kelly, a Republican from Stratford, said the independent auditors being hired by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont's administration should look into the municipalities that received state school construction grants. COURANT FILE PHOTO

GOP doubts adequacy of school grant audit

By Susan Haigh
Associated Press

Republican state legislators raised concerns Tuesday that a planned external audit of Connecticut's school construction funding program may fall short of what's needed to get to the "truth" about what, if anything, was amiss in a contracting process currently under federal investigation.

Senate Minority Leader Kevin Kelly, a Republican from Stratford, said the independent auditors being hired by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont's administration should look into the municipalities that received state school construction grants, considering some local officials have said they felt pressured to hire

certain contractors for those projects.

"The guiding principle here should be getting to the truth, not getting to a fast answer," Kelly said during a confirmation hearing for Michelle Gilman, Lamont's nominee for Department of Administrative Services commissioner. "I think the purpose here is to get transparency, to get to the truth, to restore public confidence in their government. And what we need to do is whatever it takes to get there."

State officials recently received a federal grand jury subpoena seeking electronic communications dating to Jan. 1, 2018, involving former Office of Policy and Management Deputy Secretary Konstantinos Diamantis and the "planning, bidding, award-

ing and implementation" of school construction projects, upgrades at the state pier in New London, and hazardous material abatement projects.

Oversight of school construction grants was originally administered by the Department of Administrative Services before moving to the Office of Policy and Management when Diamantis moved from one agency to the next. It's now handled by DAS again.

Republicans have made the federal probe an election-year issue.

An attorney for Diamantis has said his client "broke no law" and "many of the claims of undue influence and so forth are people who simply don't understand the state bidding process."

Gilman said Tuesday the Lamont administration expects to hire an independent auditing firm or firms in the next few days. They will conduct a forensic audit, examining five years worth of hazardous materials contracts as well as how internal state agency auditors scrutinized the school construction grants program during that time period, said Noel Petra, interim director of the Office of School Construction Grants and Review at the Department of Administrative Services, last week.

Gilman said the goal is to have the outside audit completed by the end of April, calling it a "very aggressive schedule." Gilman said the scope of the external audit may eventually be expanded. She tried to assure Kelly the Lamont administration shares his concerns about finding out what happened and making any necessary changes.

"Senator, we have the same goals in terms of meeting the transparency and restoring confidence in this program. And the governor has said that publicly," Gilman said, noting the various steps being taken to update procurement and contracting policies and procedures and boost state ethics training.

"Make no mistake that this will be a very comprehensive audit. It will not be on a fast track in terms of a sloppy process or procedure," Gilman said of the outside analysis. "It will be done accurately and professionally."

described the proposal as a "one-time pay compression adjustment, not a yearly increase" into the future.

"It separates captains' pay from majors, lieutenants, colonels and the colonel," Foley said. "It also affords CSP to retain some of experience and leadership of the department. The department has seen a huge hiring initiative and a huge promotion of over 100 sergeants and 17 lieutenants. This is a problem that has been developing over the past 10 years, and we are working to fix it."

Currently, state police have 140 sergeants, 17 lieutenants, and 11 captains.

The eight officers who retired Tuesday included four troopers, two sergeants, one lieutenant and one captain. Those who have declared they are retiring on April 1 include one lieutenant colonel, three majors, four captains, four lieutenants, 10 sergeants and 30 troopers.

The state police department has been hiring troopers at a steady pace, simply to keep up with retirements.

Since Lamont took office in January 2019, a total of 301 troopers of all ranks have retired, said Andrew Matthews, a retired sergeant who leads the troopers' union. The SEBAC agreement of 2017 changed the eligibility for a hazardous duty pension to 25 years, up from the current 20 years, he said.

"We've seen a significant increase of people leaving exactly at 20 years," Matthews said in an interview. "The job has changed so much. Morale is not that great."

Matthews is in favor of financial incentives, but he says it is getting late in the process as June 30 approaches.

"It would have been probably more productive for them to think of this a while ago," Matthews said. "Coming up with a solution to retain the institutional knowledge of our agency should have taken a priority a long time ago. It's positive that he's trying to fix it now because it'll be for the future. We hope that he does get salary increases for his command staff because we'll be seeking the same thing for our guys."

Close to a quarter of the state's total workforce — roughly 13,000 employees — will be eligible for retirement on July 1.

About 8,000 executive branch workers will be eligible for retirement, and some officials expect more than 5,000 to take it. Thousands of workers in the judicial branch and within the state's higher education system are also expected to depart on July 1, but they were not included in a study by a legislative task force analyzing the issue.

Christopher Keating can be reached at ckeating@courant.com

Costs

from Page 1

Affairs found that products marketed to women cost an average of 7% more than similar products for men, and that personal-care products, such as razors, cost an average of 13% more for women.

Several states, including California and New York, have passed similar measures. And it's not the first time Connecticut lawmakers have considered such a proposal; a bill barring gender-based pricing was proposed in 1996, Slap said.

"We understand the impact of pay inequity and the gender wage gap more now," Slap said, noting that lawmakers in 2018 passed a bill to address pay inequity by barring employers from asking applicants about their past salaries.

"This is a continuation of saying women should not face discrimination in the workplace or in the marketplace," Slap said.

This year's version of the Connecticut legislation, Senate Bill 189, would allow individuals who believe they've been subject to discriminatory pricing to file a claim with the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities seeking damages.

Republican lawmakers said the proposal would place a heavy burden on businesses.

"I agree no one wants to see discriminatory practices in any way shape or form," Rep. Holly Cheeseman, R-East Lyme. "But I'm very concerned by hearing repeated references to fines, to punitive action. I think we've seen businesses struggle so much during the pandemic."

Dry cleaners, Cheeseman said, are a good example. "They've seen business dry up because people aren't going to the office... We are constantly making demands on our businesses, most of which are small and medium-sized and I am hesitant to do anything that's going to make their lives even harder."

Supporters of the bill say it would allow businesses to charge more if the women's version of the product is more costly or the service provided is more complicated.

For instance, dry cleaners could charge more to clean an intricately designed women's silk blouse than they would for a simple cotton men's shirt. Hair stylists could charge a lower rate for short hair than they do for long hair.

But the price differential could not be based on gender or marketing alone.

"It shouldn't be based on gender," Slap said. "It should be based on cost."

CHRO officials said the section of the bill allowing for damages should be removed. Instead they are proposing that the agency be granted the ability to levy a fine against businesses that violate the law and conduct a public relations campaign to educate the public about price parity law.

"We want to start with educating the public and working with companies to demonstrate that a single blade razor... should not be priced substantially differently" if it's pink instead of blue, Tanya Hughes, executive director of the CHRO, told the committee.

"I think civil rights are good for business and I think companies should welcome the opportunity to make certain that the products they're providing are not discriminating against anyone based on their gender," Hughes said.



Public Safety Commissioner James Rovella is seeking pay raises for top commanders in the state police to encourage them to avoid retiring before July 1. MARK MIRKO/COURANT

"This is about experience, talent retention and compression of pay between the ranks," said Brian J. Foley, a top aide to Rovella.

The police pay raises require approval by various levels at the state Department of Administrative Services and the governor's budget office, which oversees funding for the overall \$24.2 billion state budget for the fiscal year that starts on July 1.

The retirements are prompted by an agreement that was negotiated by the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition, known as SEBAC, in 2017.

Employees retiring before July 1 will receive their current benefits that include a guaranteed minimum 2% cost-of-living increase in their annual pensions, as well as free health care premiums for some retirees and

spouses. After that date, there will be no guaranteed 2% minimum COLA and health care would cost roughly \$80 per month or about \$1,000 per year, officials said. The changes also include a longer wait for a cost-of-living adjustment for pension benefits, including waiting 30 months for their first COLA after retirement — instead of nine months.

The rules and nuances are highly complicated, and a summary of the highlights for state employees stretches for nine typewritten pages. The state has multiple "tiers" that depend on when the employee was hired, and the various tiers have different rules and levels of benefits.

The pay increase for police commanders could range from 3% to 5%, but the final amount has not yet been decided. Police

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WAR IN UKRAINE

Zelenskyy assails 'terror' campaign

Russian artillery, air attacks increase in key urban centers

By Yuras Karmanau, Jim Heintz and Vladimir Isachenkov
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces escalated their attacks on crowded urban areas Tuesday, bombarding the central square in Ukraine's second-biggest city and Kyiv's main TV tower in what the country's president called a blatant campaign of terror.

"Nobody will forgive. Nobody will forget," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed after the bloodshed on the square in Kharkiv.

Ukrainian authorities said five people were killed in the attack on the TV tower, which is a couple of miles from central Kyiv and a short walk from numerous apartment buildings.

A TV control room as well as a power substation were hit, and at least some Ukrainian channels briefly stopped broadcasting, officials said.

Zelenskyy's office also reported a powerful missile attack on the site of the Babi Yar Holocaust memorial, near the tower. A spokesman for the memorial said a Jewish cemetery at the site, where Nazi occupiers killed more than 33,000 Jews over two days in 1941, was damaged, but the extent would not be clear until daylight.

At the same time, a 40-mile convoy of hundreds of Russian tanks and other vehicles advanced slowly on Kyiv in what the West



People make their way Tuesday across a bridge that was destroyed in Irpin, Ukraine, near Kyiv. ANASTASIA VLASOVA/GETTY

feared was a bid by Russian President Vladimir Putin to topple Ukraine's government and install a Kremlin-friendly regime.

Russian forces pressed their assault on other towns and cities across the country, including the strategic ports of Odessa and Mariupol in the south.

Many military experts worry that Russia may be shifting tactics. Moscow's strategy in Chechnya and Syria was to use artillery and air bombardments to pulverize cities and crush fighters' resolve.

The bombing of the TV tower came after Russia

announced it would target transmission facilities in the capital used by Ukraine's intelligence agency. It urged people living near such places to leave their homes.

Overall death tolls from the fighting remained unclear, but a senior Western intelligence official estimated that more than 5,000 Russian soldiers have been captured or killed. Ukraine has given no overall estimate of troop losses.

The U.N. human rights office said it has recorded 136 civilian deaths. The real toll is believed to be far higher.

Britain's Defense Ministry

said it had seen an increase in Russian air and artillery strikes on populated urban areas over the past two days. It also said three cities — Kharkiv, Kherson and Mariupol — were encircled by Russian forces.

In Kharkiv, with a population of about 1.5 million, at least six people were killed when the region's Soviet-era administrative building on Freedom Square was hit with what was believed to be a missile.

The attack on Freedom Square — Ukraine's largest plaza, and the nucleus of public life in the city — was seen by many Ukrainians

as brazen evidence that the Russian invasion wasn't just about hitting military targets but also about breaking their spirit.

The bombardment blew out windows and walls of buildings that ring the massive square, which was piled high with debris and dust. Inside one building, chunks of plaster were scattered, and doors, ripped from their hinges, lay across hallways.

"People are under the ruins. We have pulled out bodies," said Yevhen Vasylenko, an emergency official.

Zelenskyy pronounced

the attack on the square "frank, undisguised terror" and a war crime. "This is state terrorism of the Russian Federation," he said.

In an emotional appeal to the European Parliament later, Zelenskyy said: "We are fighting also to be equal members of Europe. I believe that today we are showing everybody that is what we are."

He said 16 children had been killed around Ukraine on Monday, and he mocked Russia's claim that it is going after only military targets.

"Where are the children? What kind of military factories do they work at? What tanks are they going at?" Zelenskyy said.

Human Rights Watch said it documented a cluster bomb attack outside a hospital in Ukraine's east in recent days. Local residents also reported the use of such weapons in Kharkiv and the village of Kiyanka. The Kremlin denied using cluster bombs.

If the allegations are confirmed, that would represent a new level of brutality in the war and could lead to even further isolation of Russia.

Unbowed by Western condemnation, Russian officials made new threats of escalation, days after raising the specter of nuclear war. A top Kremlin official warned that the West's "economic war" against Russia could turn into a "real one."

Russian troops continued to press toward the capital, a city of nearly 3 million. The leading edge of the convoy was 17 miles from the center of the city, according to satellite imagery from Maxar Technologies.

Non-Ukrainians fleeing war report mistreatment

Refugees say border guards gave priority to their countrymen

By Vanessa Gera
Associated Press

20-hour wait at the Romania-Ukraine border.

"They were preparing their own citizens to go first ... and barely giving us a chance to cross," he said. "Every time we got near to the border, they pushed us back."

Kamal Thakur, a 34-year-old from Punjab, India, described his own ordeal trying to enter Poland, saying Ukrainian guards threatened and sometimes beat Indians with sticks.

"They said it was because we are Indian, and they said our prime minister is pro-Russia and not pro-Ukraine," Thakur said from the Polish border town of Przemysl.

Poland's ambassador to the U.N., Krzysztof Szczerbski, said the refugees admitted from Ukraine on Monday alone represented 125 countries. Ukrainians naturally accounted for the vast majority.

But Polish officials said the refugees included at least 100 nationals each from Afghanistan, Algeria, Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

Many refugees of various nationalities have noted the welcome and assistance they received once they

made it out of Ukraine.

"Of course I will stay in Europe," Ahmed Mughni, a 22-year-old from Yemen, said as he warmed himself over a campfire after crossing into Poland at Medyka.

Mughni has been studying cybersecurity and radio electronics in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which Russian strikes pounded Tuesday.

"Yemen is also a place of war," he explained.

Ahmed Ibrahim, a 23-year-old Egyptian, arrived in Poland with his cat in a carrier late Monday, feeling stunned and sick after days of travel.

He said he had studied medicine in Ukraine for five years and had only one year left.

Ibrahim had no idea what his future holds or even what his next steps are.

"What should I do?" he asked.

The U.N. refugee agency said Tuesday that some 660,000 refugees had already fled from Ukraine into neighboring countries.

Poland, a European Union country that is already home to many Ukrainians who went there to work in recent years, has seen the most arrivals.

"This figure has been rising exponentially, hour



Students from India who fled Ukraine after it was invaded last week by Russia take a selfie Tuesday from a refugee camp in Voluntari, Romania. ANDREEA ALEXANDRU/AP

after hour, literally, since Thursday," agency chief Filippo Grandi told the U.N. Security Council on Monday, when the number had exceeded a half-million.

"I have worked in refugee crises for almost 40 years and I have rarely seen such an incredibly fast-rising exodus of people," Grandi said.

The U.N. has estimated that as many as 4 million refugees could leave Ukraine if the war deteriorates further.

Some non-Ukrainians

have complained that they have waited longer in line to cross the Polish border than Ukrainians and in some cases felt treated poorly.

Kaneka Agnihotri, an Indian student who has lived in Ukraine for six years, walked six hours without food to the Shehyni border crossing.

There, she said, Ukrainian guards humiliated her and a group of other Indians, telling them to stand up and sit down over and over again and getting close to them with guards.

She said her group later moved to a different border crossing where they were treated well.

Once the group reached Poland, officials did everything to help, Agnihotri said.

There have been some reports that Africans have been treated badly by Ukrainian border guards.

Cihan Yildiray, a 26-year-old from Turkey who has been working in Kyiv, said he saw Black people and individuals of Arabic origin being beaten by Ukrainian guards.

Experts expect Russia will unleash military tactics it has not yet employed

By David Leonhardt
The New York Times

The initial days of the Ukrainian invasion do not appear to have not gone well for Russia.

The Russian military has taken no major cities, and video from Ukraine has shown scorched Russian vehicles and dead soldiers. Contrary to what President Vladimir Putin and his aides apparently expected — and what many Westerners feared — Ukraine's

government did not fall within days.

But military experts caution against confusing a war's initial days with its likely result.

Russia has now begun to use even more brutal tactics, including a bombardment of a residential area in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, home to universities and long considered a center of national culture. On Tuesday morning, a large explosion



sion hit the center of the city.

"We're only in the opening days of this, and Putin has a lot of cards to play," said Douglas Lute, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO. "It's too early to be triumphalist, and there are a lot of Russian capabilities not employed yet."

The Russian military has an established strategy for taking over hostile cities, one it has used in Syria

and Chechnya. The strategy revolves around firing missiles and bombs into residential neighborhoods, both to destroy infrastructure and to terrify civilians into fleeing, before advancing into the city on the ground.

Many analysts, including U.S. military officials, predict that Putin will take a similar approach in Ukraine, unleashing a huge bombardment of missiles and airstrikes, killing thousands of civilians to avoid a humiliating quagmire.

Still, there is a high degree of uncertainty about what will happen in the coming days, and Ukrainian troops and civilians continue to resist the invasion, engaging Russian infantry and armored vehicles in street fights.

Ukrainians' efforts to defend their country are having an effect. Russia has not yet won control of the airspace over Ukraine, and the Ukrainian military has been surprisingly successful at downing Russian planes

and helicopters.

The U.S. and its allies are also trying to help Ukraine without sending troops.

Western European countries are sending ammunition, missiles and other equipment, while Turkey has sent drones that seem to have played a role in destroying Russian convoys. The U.S., European Union and Britain — after initially imposing relatively cautious sanctions against Russia — have also become more aggressive in recent days.

WORLD & NATION

Poll: Virus fears fade with omicron

Pandemic cases, deaths and worries continue to fall

By Michael Rubinkam and Hannah Fingerhut
Associated Press

Omicron is fading away, and so are Americans' worries about COVID-19.

As coronavirus pandemic case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths continue to plummet, fewer people now than in January say they are concerned that they will be infected after the rise and fall of the wildly contagious virus variant, according to a new poll from Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Just 24% say they are "extremely" or "very" worried about themselves or a family member contracting COVID-19, down from 36% in both December and January, when omicron caused a massive spike in infections and taxed public health systems. Another 34% say they are somewhat worried.

More than 140,000 deaths in the U.S. have been attributed to COVID-19 since omicron became the dominant strain of the coronavirus in mid-December.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, trucking dispatcher Erica Martinez said she let down her guard last summer, before the delta variant took hold, then "stopped doing a lot of the social stuff" when cases spiked again in successive waves of delta and omicron. Now, with virus numbers falling rapidly, she said she is more comfortable about socializing.

"I feel like the country is desperately trying to recover from the last two years," said Martinez, 36. "I think there will always be new variants popping up, left and right. I think, sadly, this is going to be the new norm for society," with people taking fewer or more precautions as cases ebb and flow.



A trailer with a pointed message travels with a caravan last month toward Washington, D.C., to protest COVID-19 mandates. NATHAN HOWARD/AP

That's a widespread attitude; most Americans think the virus will stick around as a mild illness, according to a January AP-NORC poll. Just 15% think COVID-19 will largely be eliminated when the pandemic is over.

Signs the nation is ready to move on from the biggest COVID-19 wave to date are everywhere. Statewide mask mandates have all but disappeared, and on Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it's no longer recommending indoor masking for most Americans, based on data.

Cities are lifting vaccine requirements to enter bars, restaurants and entertainment venues. Companies are bringing workers back to the office. California said it's taking an "endemic" approach to the virus that leans on prevention and swift containment

of outbreaks.

"I think it's reasonable and appropriate for people to live their lives a little more as the risk of infection goes down but to do it in a way that recognizes that, at some point, we're going to have another wave," said Dr. David Dowdy, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "And we're going to need to be willing to buckle down just a little bit in the future."

Concerns about infection have dipped among both vaccinated and unvaccinated Americans. Still, two-thirds of vaccinated Americans say they are at least somewhat worried about COVID-19 infection. About 4 in 10 unvaccinated Americans say the same.

Amie Adkins, of Gassaway, West Virginia, who is unvaccinated, said

she was "surrounded" by omicron but never worried about getting it, counting on a mask and good hygiene to protect herself. Data shows unvaccinated people are at much higher risk for serious illness and death than people who got the shot.

"Even after all that, if we're going to get something, we're going to get it, and there's nothing we can do about. So there's no use worrying about it," said Adkins, a 43-year-old stay-at-home mom.

Public support for masking requirements also has ticked down, though Americans are still more likely to favor than oppose requiring masks in public, 50% to 28%, in the new poll. In August 2021, 55% were in favor. Support was much higher, at roughly three-quarters of the public, in 2020.

George Reeves, an

83-year-old semiretired electrical engineer in Raleigh, North Carolina, said his mask might soon come off.

"It's a risk-reward kind of thing," said Reeves, who is vaccinated. "There's some guesswork involved, but is it worth the hassle? Probably pretty soon it won't be worth the hassle of messing with masks."

More broadly, concern about the spread of infectious diseases as a threat to the U.S. has fallen sharply from a clear majority just six months ago, according to the poll.

About half of Americans now say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about the threat posed by infectious diseases, down from roughly two-thirds in August. Still, only about 2 in 10 are not concerned.

The current level of concern is similar to an AP-NORC poll in January 2019, well before the global pandemic.

Dave Pitts, a computer engineer and college math and science tutor in Denver, is vaccinated, doesn't socialize much and wears a mask when he goes out, so he's not that worried about getting COVID-19. But Pitts — who spent three miserable weeks battling influenza in the 2009 H1N1 pandemic — predicts infectious disease will continue to pose a huge threat to the country.

He worries about a new, even deadlier variant of the coronavirus.

"I think we're in a better position now, but I think the minute spring break hits, we're going to see something worse show up," he said. "I think humanity's too dumb to be free of this just yet."

SENIOR DAY

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In Mexico, the disappeared pile up

Country's efforts lacking as number missing nears 100K

By Maria Verza

Associated Press

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico — For the investigators, the human foot — burned, but with some fabric still attached — was the tipoff: Until recently, this squat, ruined house was a place where bodies were ripped apart and incinerated, where the remains of some of Mexico's missing multitudes were obliterated.

How many disappeared in this cartel “extermination site” on the outskirts of Nuevo Laredo, near the U.S. border? After six months of work, forensic technicians still don’t offer an estimate. In a single room, the compacted, burnt human remains and debris were nearly 2 feet deep.

At the site — to which The Associated Press was given access last month — the insufficiency of investigations into Mexico's nearly 100,000 disappearances is painfully evident. There are 52,000 unidentified people in morgues and cemeteries, not counting places like this one, where the charred remains are measured only by weight.

And people continue to disappear.

And more remains are found.

“We take care of one case and 10 more arrive,” said Oswaldo Salinas, head of the Tamaulipas state attorney general’s identification team.

Uncounted bone fragments were spread across 75,000 square feet of desert scrubland outside Nuevo Laredo. Twisted wires, apparently used to tie the victims, lie scattered amid the scrub.

Each day, technicians place what they find — bones, buttons, earrings, scraps of clothing — in paper bags labeled with their contents:



Technicians excavate a cartel “extermination site” where remains are buried near Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. MARCO UGARTE/AP

“Zone E, Point 53, Quadrant I. Bone fragments exposed to fire.”

They are sent off to the forensic lab in the state capital Ciudad Victoria, where boxes of paper bags wait their turn along with others. They will wait a long time; there are not enough resources and too many fragments, too many missing, too many dead.

Meanwhile, there is no progress in bringing the guilty to justice. According to recent data from Mexico's federal auditor, of more than 1,600 investigations into disappearances by authorities or cartels opened by the attorney general's office, none made it to the courts in 2020.

Still, the work goes on at Nuevo Laredo. If nothing else, there is the hope of helping even one family find closure, though that can take years.

That's why a forensic technician smiled amid the

devastation on a recent day: She had found an unburnt tooth, a treasure that might offer DNA to make an identification possible.

When Jorge Macías, head of the Tamaulipas state search commission, and his team first came to the Nuevo Laredo site, they had to clear brush and pick up human remains over the final 100 yards just to reach the house without destroying evidence.

They found a barrel tossed in a trough, shovels and an ax with traces of blood on it. Gunfire echoed in the distance.

Nearly six months later, there are still more than 30,000 square feet of property to inspect and catalog.

The house has been cleared, but four blackened spaces used for cremation remain. In what was the bathroom, it took the technicians three weeks to carefully excavate the compacted mass of human remains, concrete and melted tires,

said Salinas, who leads work at the site. Grease streaks the walls.

Macías found the Nuevo Laredo house last August when he was looking for more than 70 people who had disappeared in the first half of the year along a stretch of highway connecting Monterrey and Nuevo Laredo, the busiest trade crossing with the United States.

Most who disappeared here were truck drivers, cabbies, but also at least one family and various U.S. citizens. About a dozen have been found alive.

Last July, Karla Quintana, head of the National Search Commission, said the disappearances appeared to be related to a dispute between the Jalisco New Generation cartel, which was trying to enter the area, and the Northeast cartel, which wanted to keep them out. It's not clear if the victims were smugglers of drugs or people, if some

were abducted mistakenly or if the goal was simply to generate terror.

The phenomenon of Mexico's disappearances exploded in 2006 when the government declared war on the drug cartels. For years, the government looked the other way as violence increased and families of the missing were forced to become detectives.

It wasn't until 2018 — the end of the last administration — that a law passed, laying the legal foundations for the government to establish the National Search Commission. There followed local commissions in every state; protocols that separated searches from investigations; and a temporary and independent body of national and international technical experts supported by the U.N. to help clear the backlog of unidentified remains.

The official total of the missing stands at 98,234. Even without the civil wars

or military dictatorships that afflicted other Latin American countries, Mexico's disappeared are exceeded in the region only by war-torn Colombia. Unlike other countries, Mexico's challenge still has no end: authorities and families search for people who disappeared in the 1960s and those who went missing today.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's government was the first to recognize the extent of the problem, to talk of “extermination sites” and to mount effective searches.

But he also promised in 2019 that authorities would have all the resources they needed.

The national commission, which was supposed to have 352 employees this year, still has just 89. And Macías' state commission has 22 positions budgeted, but has only filled a dozen slots.

There the issue isn't money; the difficulty is finding applicants who pass background checks.

“This issue is a monster,” Macías said.

Even if technicians manage to extract DNA, identification isn't assured because the profile will only automatically be crossed with a state database. A federal genetic database still doesn't exist.

It could be years before even non-genetic information is added to one of the national databases.

In 2020, the federal auditor said that system had only 7,600 registered disappeared and 6,500 registered dead.

Though the federal law calls for a system in which various databases can interact, that doesn't exist, said Marlene Herbig of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

No one can give an estimate how much money is needed or how many years it could take to see significant results in Mexico's efforts to locate and identify the tens of thousands who have disappeared.



Parts of Australia are seeing the worst flooding since a once-in-a-century event in 2011. Above, people wade through floodwater Tuesday in Chinderah, Australia. JASON O'BRIEN/AAP

Thousands evacuate worst Australian floods in a decade

By Rod McGuirk and John Pye

Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia — Tens of thousands of people were ordered to evacuate their homes by Tuesday and hundreds of thousands more were told to prepare to flee as parts of Australia's southeast coast were inundated by the worst flooding in more than a decade. At least 10 people have died.

New South Wales Premier Dominic Perrottet said there had been 1,000 rescues in the state by Tuesday and more than 6,000 calls for authorities to help.

Scores of residents, some with pets, spent hours trapped on their roofs by a fast-rising river in the town of Lismore in the state's north.

The body of a woman in her 80s was found by a neighbor in her Lismore home Tuesday, a police statement said. There were no details of how she died.

Dozens of cars were trapped on a bridge in nearby Woodburn on Monday night with both the bridge's approaches submerged. Up to 50 people were rescued from the

bridge early Tuesday, officials said.

“We had no capabilities to get them off in the dark so we just had to make sure that they bunkered down and we went in this morning and got them all out,” Woodburn State Emergency Services Commander Ashley Slapp said.

The floodwaters were moving south into New South Wales from Queensland state in the worst disaster in the region since what was described as a once-in-a-century event in 2011.

Perrottet said 40,000 people had been ordered to evacuate, while 300,000 others had been placed under evacuation warnings.

Government meteorologist Jonathan Howe called the recent rainfall in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland “astronomical.”

Nine of the 10 deaths reported were in Queensland. A 76-year-old man who disappeared with his vehicle in floodwaters northwest of Brisbane on Sunday has since been confirmed dead.

Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina

Carroll said another man in his 70s remained missing after falling from his moored yacht in the state capital Brisbane into a swollen river on Saturday.

The cleanup was underway in Brisbane, Australia's third most populous city, despite more storms forecast for later in the week. Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner urged people to register for the “Mud Army,” as the thousands of volunteers who mobilized to help out after the 2011 floods were dubbed.

Thousands of homes in Brisbane were inundated Sunday, many by swollen creeks in suburbs such as Ashgrove, where Kelvin Barfoot had to evacuate with members of his family, including his 99-year-old mother-in-law, Mina Baker, in a State Emergency Service rescue boat.

The family moved back into the top floor of their two-story home and started removing damaged furniture and appliances that had been covered by almost 5 feet of water.

“We thought we were pretty well prepared for it,” said Barfoot.

Jackson begins her quest for Supreme Court confirmation

By Mary Clare Jalonick

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson has taken the first step toward confirmation in the Senate, answering written questions from the Senate Judiciary Committee as she prepares to begin meeting with senators Wednesday.

Senate Democrats are hoping they can vote on her confirmation to replace retiring Justice Stephen Breyer by mid-April.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said Monday the committee would be able to move forward with scheduling hearings, expected mid-March, once they received Jackson's questionnaire.

The committee sent the questionnaire on Friday and she returned it by Tuesday.

“I think we can reach that possibility,” Durbin said of confirming Jackson by mid-April.

If confirmed, Jackson would be the first Black female justice in the court's more than 200-year history. Breyer has said he won't leave the bench until this summer, when the court's session is over, but Democrats are taking no chances in case there is any shift in their narrow 50-50 majority. Vice President Kamala Harris provides the deciding vote.

In the 149-page questionnaire, Jackson reveals that she was first contacted by the White House Jan. 30, three days after Breyer announced his retirement.

Jackson, who was confirmed last year as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, had long been seen as Biden's top candidate for the job, which he had promised would go to a Black woman.

Jackson met with Harris in a video call Feb. 11 and then interviewed with

Biden at the White House on Feb. 14, she says in the questionnaire.

Biden called and offered her the nomination Feb. 24, a day before he made his decision public.

The questionnaire provides the committee with a record of every job she has held and the decisions she has made in her nine years as a federal judge, as well as any recusals and potential conflicts of interest.

Senators and staff will be able to vet that information much more quickly than they would have for other candidates since they just considered her last year for her current position on the appeals court.

Prior to that, Jackson was a federal district court judge in Washington.

Jackson's list of her most significant cases contains only one new entry from the appeals court, describing an opinion she wrote for a unanimous three-judge panel that came out in favor of labor unions.

On Wednesday, Jackson will begin the customary meetings on Capitol Hill, where she'll make the rounds to members of both

parties.

She is scheduled to meet first with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., Durbin and Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, the top Republican on the Judiciary panel.

Durbin said Monday he's still hoping to win some GOP votes for her confirmation, even though many Republicans have expressed skepticism because they say Jackson is too liberal.

Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina were the only Republicans who voted to confirm Jackson to the appeals court last year.

While Collins has appeared open to voting for Jackson again, Murkowski said in a statement last week that her previous vote did not mean she would be supportive this time.

Graham had pushed for a different candidate from his home state, federal district court Judge J. Michelle Childs, and expressed disappointment that she was not Biden's pick for the high court.



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is President Joe Biden's selection to replace retiring Justice Stephen Breyer on the Supreme Court. SARAHBETH MANEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

WORLD & NATION

NEWS BRIEFING

Dad under restraining order kills 3 daughters, chaperone in church

From news services

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A man who was under a restraining order and not supposed to have a gun fatally shot his three daughters, a chaperone and himself during a supervised visit with the girls at a California church, officials said Tuesday.

Investigators were trying to piece together the father's motive and how he got the weapon used in the shooting that occurred at about 5 p.m. Monday. Under California state law, he was not supposed to have a gun because of the restraining order.

On Tuesday, a small memorial with flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, a candle and a piece of paper that read "Prayers for peace, may your souls rest" was set up outside the church in the Arden-Arcade neighborhood of Sacramento.

The girls — ages 9, 10 and 13 — attended schools in northwestern Sacramento.

Yadira Ortega lives across the street from the church and said she heard the gunfire while sitting in her car with her two young children after picking up dinner for her family.

Ortega said there were multiple shots, then a pause before a final shot. Minutes later the area was swarming with police, she said.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office has offered few details about the shooting inside the church, which sits on a mostly residential block near a commercial area east of downtown Sacramento. Authorities have not disclosed the names of the 39-year-old gunman or the victims and have not said what type of weapon used.

Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones said the shooter was estranged from his

daughters' mother, who had a restraining order against him. Detectives are treating the shooting as a domestic violence incident.

Investigators believe the shooting happened during a supervised visit for the father inside the church.

Paternity leave: While Pope Francis has urged couples to have more children, he raised eyebrows Tuesday when he revamped the Vatican's family leave policy with a new benefit giving new dads just three days of paid paternity leave.

Under the policy, mothers already were entitled to six months' maternity leave at full pay, which they can extend by another six months at half-pay. Parents who adopt a child are entitled to a similar benefit.

The new law sets out a three-day leave for new fathers at full pay. In Italy, fathers can take 10 days paid leave while mothers get five months.

The comparatively paltry Vatican policy for dads drew criticism on social media, with one person saying that three days was about the time needed to learn how to properly install a car seat.

Israel stays evictions: Israel's Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that a group of families slated for eviction from an east Jerusalem neighborhood can remain in their homes for now.

The ruling could work to ease tensions in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, which helped ignite the 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza last year.

The court ruled that the families can stay in their homes for now until Israel carries out a land arrangement, a process that could take years or may not be carried out at all, according to



Mardi Gras revelers cheer as the Zulu parade passes Tuesday in New Orleans. Revelers in traditional purple, green and gold lined city streets for the first full-dress Mardi Gras since 2020. "This is Christmas to me," said one parade-goer. Last year's event was largely muted because of the pandemic, but case numbers and hospitalizations are falling worldwide. **GERALD HERBERT/AP**

Ir Amim, an advocacy group not involved in the court case.

For the time being, the four families residing in the homes will be recognized as protected tenants. Each will deposit a largely symbolic rent amounting to \$62 a month to a trust, until the property's ownership is settled.

Wis. election report: The Republican-hired investigator of Wisconsin's 2020 election testified Tuesday that the state Legislature should "take a very hard look at the option of decertification of the 2020" presidential election, a move GOP leaders reiterated they won't make and that nonpartisan attorneys call illegal.

Michael Gableman released a 136-page "interim report" amid a nationwide GOP effort to reshape elections following President Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump.

Gableman, a former state Supreme Court justice whose probe has been dismissed as

partisan by election experts and some Republicans, spent three hours detailing his findings before the Assembly elections committee.

Republican Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke rejected the call to decertify the election.

"Still not legal under Wisconsin law," Steineke tweeted.

Ann Jacobs, the Democratic chair of the bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission, tweeted that decertifying the election was "IMPOSSIBLE. NOT LEGAL."

Democratic Gov. Tony Evers called Gableman's work a "circus," an "embarrassment for our state" and a "colossal waste of taxpayer dollars."

Queen accepts audiences: Queen Elizabeth II held two virtual audiences after more than a week of suffering cold-like symptoms from COVID-19.

Buckingham Palace

said the 95-year-old British monarch held virtual sessions with the ambassadors of Chad and Andorra. The queen canceled several sessions last week, so the ones held Tuesday suggest she is recovering.

The monarch's age, COVID-19 diagnosis and a health scare last year caused worry among officials and the public. The palace's Feb. 20 announcement that Elizabeth had tested positive prompted concern and get-well wishes from across Britain's political spectrum.

The palace has declined to offer day-to-day commentary on the monarch's health, citing privacy.

The monarch celebrated her 70th anniversary on the throne in January and has a series of upcoming engagements for her Platinum Jubilee.

Libya government: Libyan lawmakers confirmed a new transitional government Tuesday, a move that is likely

to lead to parallel administrations and fuel mounting tensions in a country mired in conflict for the past decade.

Prime Minister-designate Fathi Bashagha submitted his Cabinet to the east-based House of Representatives, where 92 of 101 lawmakers approved it in a vote broadcast live from the city of Tobruk.

The new government includes three deputy prime ministers, 29 ministers and six ministers of state. There are only two women in the Cabinet.

The appointment of Bashagha last month, a powerful former interior minister, is part of a roadmap that also involves constitutional amendments and sets the date for elections within 14 months.

Embattled Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah remained defiant against replacing his government. In a statement, Dbeibah's government called the confirmation a "new farce."

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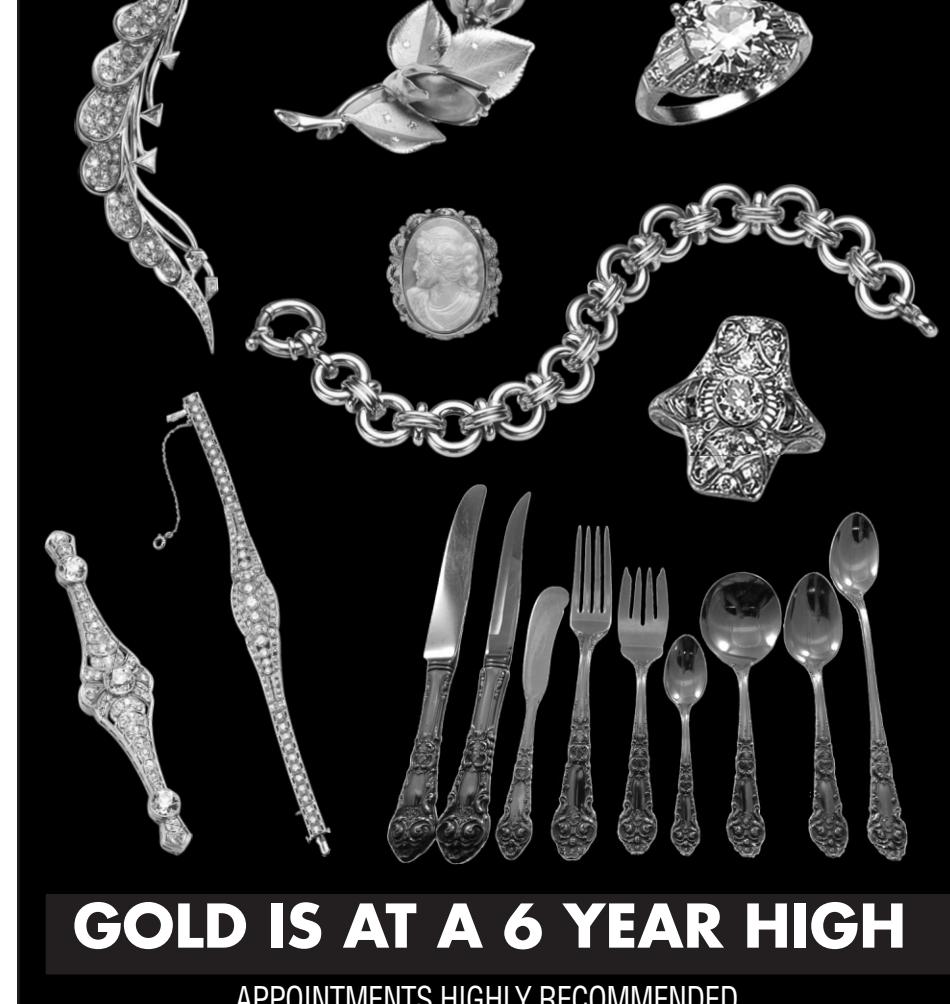
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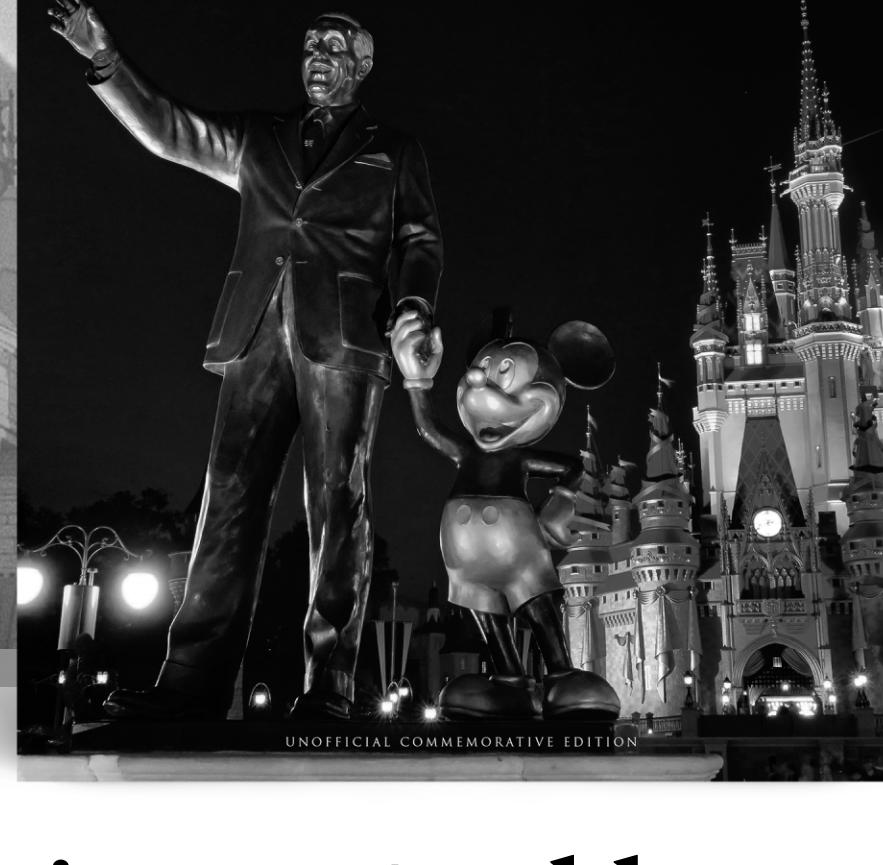
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CoQ10's Failure Leaves Millions Wanting

*Use this pill to supercharge your
brain and think better than ever.*

Millions of Americans take the supplement CoQ10. It's the "jet fuel" that supercharges your cells' power generators, known as mitochondria.

As you age, your mitochondria begin to die. In fact, by age 67, you lose 80% of the mitochondria you had at age 25.1 But if you're taking CoQ10, there's something important you should know.

As powerful as CoQ10 is, there is a critical thing it fails to do. It can't create new mitochondria in your cells.

Taking CoQ10 is not enough

"There's a little-known NASA nutrient that multiplies the number of new power generators in your cells by up to 55%," says Dr. Al Sears, owner of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Royal Palm Beach, Florida. "Science once thought this was impossible. But now you can make your heart, brain and body young again."

"I tell my patients the most important thing I can do is increase their 'health span.' This is the length of time you can live free of disease and with all your youthful abilities and faculties intact."

Medical first: Multiply the "power generators" in your cells

Al Sears, M.D., recently released an energy-boosting supplement based on this NASA nutrient that has become so popular, he's having trouble keeping it in stock.

Dr. Sears is the author of over 500 scientific papers on anti-aging and recently spoke at the WPBF 25 Health & Wellness Festival featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people listened to Dr. Sears speak on his anti-aging breakthroughs and attended his book signing at the event.

Now, Dr. Sears has come up with what his peers consider his greatest contribution to anti-aging medicine yet — a newly discovered nutrient that multiplies the number of tiny, energy-producing "engines" located inside the body's cells, shattering the limitations of traditional CoQ10 supplements.

Why mitochondria matter

As a single cell in your body can contain between 200 to 2,000 mitochondria, with the largest number found in the most metabolically active cells, like those in your brain, heart and skeletal muscles.

But because of changes in cells, stress and poor diet, most people's power generators begin to malfunction and die off as they age. In fact, the Mitochondria Research Society reports 50 million U.S. adults are suffering from health problems because of mitochondrial dysfunction.

Common ailments often associated with aging — such as memory problems, heart issues, blood sugar concerns and vision and hearing difficulties — can all be connected to a decrease in mitochondria.

Birth of new mitochondria

Dr. Sears and his researchers combined the most powerful form of CoQ10 available — called ubiquinol — with a unique, newly discovered natural compound called PQQ that has the remarkable ability to grow new mitochondria. Together, the two powerhouses are now available in a supplement called Ultra Accel II.

Discovered by a NASA probe in space dust, PQQ (Pyrroloquinoline quinone) stimulates something called "mitochondrial biogenesis" — a unique process that actually boosts the number of healthy mitochondria in your cells.

In a study published in the Journal of Nutrition, mice fed PQQ grew a staggering number of new mitochondria, showing an increase of more than 55% in just eight weeks.

The mice with the strongest mitochondria showed no signs of aging — even when they were the



If your bottle of CoQ10 does not have this NASA nutrient in it, then you are NOT getting the full benefits of CoQ10

equivalent of 80 years old.

**Science stands behind
the power of PQQ**

Biochemical Pharmacology reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants.

"Imagine 5,000 times more efficient energy," says Dr. Sears. "PQQ has been a game changer for my patients."

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears' patients. "I am in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearer, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

It works right away

Along with an abundance of newfound energy, users also report a sharper, more focused mind and memory, and even younger-looking skin and hair. Jerry M. from Wellington, Florida, used Ultra Accel and was amazed at the effect.

"I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry. "My endurance almost doubled. But it's not just in your body. You can feel it mentally, too," says Jerry. "Not only do I feel a difference, but the way it protects my cells is great insurance against a health disaster as I get older."

Increase your health span today

The demand for this supplement is so high, Dr. Sears is having trouble keeping it in stock. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling or looking older than their age... or for those who are tired or growing more forgetful."

"My favorite part of practicing anti-aging medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. Ultra Accel sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... and they actually feel young again."

Where to find Ultra Accel II

Right now, the only way to get this potent combination of PQQ and super-powered CoQ10 is with Dr. Sears' breakthrough Ultra Accel II formula.

To secure bottles of this hot, new supplement, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at 1-800-658-9459 within the next 48 hours. "It takes time to get bottles shipped out to drug stores," said Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to the customer."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product, he offers a 100%, money-back guarantee on every order. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I'll send you your money back," said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number will be shut down to allow them to restock.

Call 1-800-658-9459 to secure your limited supply of Ultra Accel II. You don't need a prescription, and those who call in the first 24 hours qualify for a significant discount. **To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code NP0222UA60 when you call in.**

THESE STATEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN EVALUATED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INTENDED TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT, CURE OR PREVENT ANY DISEASE. RESULTS MAY VARY.

BUSINESS

COURANT.COM / BUSINESS

US, allies agree to release oil reserves as prices soar

Addition of 60M barrels aims to keep energy flowing after Russia's invasion

By Stanley Reed

The New York Times

With oil prices soaring to well above \$100 a barrel, the International Energy Agency said Tuesday that member countries had agreed to release 60 million barrels of oil from their emergency reserves.

The agency said the aim was to send "a unified and strong message to global oil markets that there will be no shortfall as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

The decision was made at a meeting of energy ministers chaired by U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm.

The energy agency said that the release was the fourth in its history and would provide the equivalent of 2 million barrels a day, or about 2% of global consumption, for 30 days.

Oil prices have been turbulent since they hit a seven-year high of \$105 a barrel last week after the Russian attack started. On Tuesday, Brent crude was up nearly 6.7%, to \$104.97 a barrel.

The meeting was called amid concerns

that sanctions imposed on Moscow by Western nations could result in reduced flows of energy from Russia, which supplies 1 in 10 barrels of oil globally as well as around one-third of the European Union's natural gas.

Barring a breakthrough in peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, there was a risk of a large portion of Russian oil exports being crimped by sanctions, even though Western governments have said that they do not intend to disrupt energy flows, analysts at Goldman Sachs said in a research note. If so, oil prices could go as high as \$120 a barrel, the analysts forecast.

So far, loadings of tankers of oil and liquefied natural gas from Russia are proceeding as normal, said Alex Booth, head of research at Kpler, which tracks shipping.

But, he added, a liquefied natural gas tanker coming from a facility partly owned by TotalEnergies in Russia and named for Christophe de Margerie, the French giant's former chief executive who was killed in a plane crash in Moscow in 2014, had recently changed its destination from Brit-

ain to France after London barred Russian-linked ships from British ports.

Potential relief could come from OPEC and its allies, which are expected to meet Wednesday to discuss the oil markets. So far, there is little indication that the group is willing to do more than agree to go ahead with its usual 400,000 barrels a day of additional supply in April.

Saudi Arabia, the co-leader of the group, called OPEC+, has been talking with Biden administration officials, but a deal does not yet seem to have been reached. Discussions are likely to be complicated because Russia is the co-leader of OPEC+.

And it is uncertain if there will be enough support at the meeting for an increase in production beyond 400,000 barrels a day. The United Arab Emirates, which along with the Saudis would be expected to be a source of additional oil supplies, recently abstained from the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That decision "underscores the likely unwillingness" of some countries to bolster production at this time, Croft said.

Cargo ship carrying cars sinks after blaze

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal — A large cargo vessel carrying cars from Germany to the United States sank Tuesday in the mid-Atlantic, 13 days after a fire broke out on board, the ship's manager and the Portuguese navy said.

The Felicity Ace sank about 250 miles off Portugal's Azores Islands as it was being towed, MOL Ship Management in Singapore said in a statement. A salvage team had put out the fire.

The 650-foot-long vessel listed to starboard before going under, the ship's manager said.

The Portuguese navy confirmed the sinking, saying it occurred outside Portuguese waters. A Portuguese Air Force helicopter evacuated the 22 crew members when the fire broke out, setting the ship adrift.

Ocean-going tugboats with firefighting equipment had been hosing down the ship's hull to cool it.

It wasn't clear how many cars were onboard the ship, but vessels of the Felicity Ace's size can carry at least 4,000 vehicles.

European carmakers declined to discuss how many vehicles and what models were on board, but Porsche customers in the United States were being contacted by their dealers, the company said.

The ship was transporting electric and non-electric vehicles, according to Portuguese authorities. Suspicion on what started the fire Feb. 16 has fallen on lithium batteries used in electric vehicles, though authorities say they have no firm evidence about the cause.

Authorities feared that the ship carrying 2,200 tons of fuel and 2,200 tons of oil could pollute the ocean. It can carry more than 18,700 tons of cargo.

The Portuguese navy said a few pieces of wreckage and a small patch of oil were visible where the ship sank.

BUSINESS BRIEFING

Egypt increases Suez transit fees

CAIRO — Cash-strapped Egypt increased transit fees Tuesday for ships passing through the Suez Canal, one of the world's most crucial waterways, with hikes of up to 10%, officials said.

The Suez Canal Authority said on its website the increases were "in line with the significant growth in global trade" and cited the canal's "development and enhancement of the transit service."

According to a statement, transit fees for liquefied petroleum gas, chemical tankers, and other liquid bulk tankers increased by 10%. Vessels carrying vehicles, natural gas and general cargo, as well as multi-purpose vessels, will see an increase of 7%, while a 5% increase will be imposed on oil and crude tankers and dry bulk vessels, it said.

Texas firm sues over Calif. leak

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — A Houston-based oil company on Monday sued two container ship operators and an organization that helps oversee marine traffic, saying they failed to prevent last year's underwater pipeline leak off the Southern California coast.

Amplify Energy Corp., which owns the pipeline that ruptured and faces a criminal charge for its oversight, claims that two ships dragged their anchors across the pipeline that ferried crude from offshore oil platforms to the coast.

The federal court filing also accuses the Marine Exchange of Southern California of failing to route the ships to deeper waters before a storm and not informing Amplify after the anchor-dragging incidents.



Google headquarters, left, Twitter headquarters in California and an Apple store in New York. The tech titans are among several warned by Russia last month that they needed to comply with a new law. LAURA MORTON AND GABBY JONES/THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTOS 2020

Russia intensifies censorship

Campaign amid ongoing attack of Ukraine is meant to pressure world's tech giants

By Adam Satariano

The New York Times

As Russia attacks Ukraine, authorities in Moscow are intensifying a censorship campaign at home by squeezing some of the world's biggest tech companies.

On Feb. 16, Russian authorities warned Google, Meta, Apple, Twitter, TikTok and others that they had until the end of the month to comply with a new law that requires them to set up legal entities in the country. The so-called landing law makes the companies and their employees more vulnerable to Russia's legal system and the demands of government censors, legal experts and civil society groups said.

The moves are part of a Russian pressure campaign against foreign technology companies. Using the prospect of fines, arrests and the blocking or slowing down of internet services, authorities are pushing the companies to censor unfavorable material online while keeping pro-Kremlin media unfiltered.

Apple, TikTok and Spotify have complied with the landing law, according to Russian internet regulator Roskomnadzor, and Google has taken steps to do so as well. Twitch and Telegram have not. Meta, the parent of Facebook, and Twitter have complied with some parts of the law.

The situation has tech companies caught between their public support for free expression and privacy and their work in countries with authoritarian leaders. It has forced them to weigh having their services available in Russia against leaving altogether.

Increasingly, the companies are facing pressure from Ukrainian officials and U.S. lawmakers to limit their involvement in Russia. Ukraine's vice prime minister has asked Apple, Google, Netflix and Meta to restrict access to their services inside Russia. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, sent a letter to Meta, Reddit, Telegram and others, urging them to not let Russian entities use their platforms to sow confusion about the war.

Last week, Roskomnadzor said it would restrict access to Facebook by slowing down traffic. The regulator said the social network had interfered with several

pro-Kremlin media outlets.

Nick Clegg, Meta's top policy executive, said the company had refused Russian demands that it stop independent fact-checking of posts from four state-owned media organizations. The company said it would bar Russian state media from running ads on the social network.

Twitter, which had said it was pausing ads in Ukraine and Russia, said last week that its service was also being restricted for some people in Russia. On Sunday, Roskomnadzor also demanded that Google lift restrictions on some Russian media outlets after the company had limited their ability to make money from advertising on YouTube.

The new landing law is a move by the Kremlin to counter attempts by the tech companies to minimize their physical presences in Russia. The law, which took effect Jan. 1, requires foreign websites and social media platforms that have more than 500,000 daily users to register as legal entities in the country, with a locally based leader. It also requires the companies to register an account with Roskomnadzor and to create an electronic form for Russian citizens or government authorities to contact the companies with complaints.

Apple, TikTok and Spotify have complied with the landing law, according to Russian internet regulator Roskomnadzor, and Google has taken steps to do so as well. Twitch and Telegram have not. Meta, the parent of Facebook, and Twitter have complied with some parts of the law.

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BUSINESS



Benjamin Frey, a professor in North Carolina and a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, led the language research behind a new smartphone interface. GERRY BROOME/AP

Tech developed to help keep the Cherokee language alive

By Matt O'Brien

Associated Press

By itself, being able to read smartphone home screens in Cherokee won't be enough to safeguard the Indigenous language, endangered after a long history of erasure. But it might be a step toward immersing younger tribal citizens in the language spoken by a dwindling number of their elders.

That's the hope of Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who's counting on more inclusive consumer technology — and the involvement of a major tech company — to help out.

Sneed and other Cherokee leaders have spent several months consulting with Lenovo-owned Motorola, which recently introduced a Cherokee language interface on its newest line of phones. Now phone users will be able to find apps and toggle settings using the syllable-based written form of the language first created by the Cherokee Nation's Sequoyah in the early 1800s. It will appear on the

company's high-end Edge Plus phones when they go on sale in the spring.

It's not the first time consumer technology has embraced the language, as Apple, Microsoft and Google already enable people to configure their laptops and phones so that they can type in Cherokee. But the Cherokee language preservationists who worked on the Motorola project said they tried to imbue it with the culture — not just the written symbols — they are trying to protect.

Take the start button on the Motorola interface, which features a Cherokee word that translates into English as "just start." That's a nod to the casual way Cherokee elders might use the phrase, said Benjamin Frey, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"It could have said 'let's get started' in many different ways," Frey said. "But it said halenagwu — just start. And that's very Cherokee. I can kind of see an elder kind of shrugging and saying, 'Well, I guess let's do it.' ... It

reminds me very fondly of how the elders talk."

When Motorola thought of incorporating Cherokee into its phones, Frey was one of the people it reached out to. It was looking to incorporate a language that the U.N.'s culture agency, UNESCO, had designated as among the world's most endangered but also one that had an active community of language scholars it could consult.

Frey and Sneed said they recognize that some Cherokee will have concerns about tech companies making a product feature of their work to preserve their language.

"I think it is a danger that companies could take this kind of material and take advantage of it, selling it without sharing the proceeds with community members," Frey said. "Personally, I decided that the potential benefit was worth the risk."

Only about 225 of the roughly 16,000 members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians spoke Cherokee fluently as their first language at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

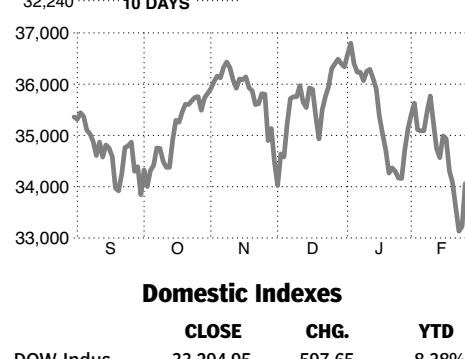
MARKET RUNDOWN

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

DOW
33,294.95 -597.65

10-YR T-BOND
1.72% -.11

GOLD
\$1,942.40 +43.00



Dow Jones Industrials

Close: 33,294.95

Change: -597.65 (-1.8%)

Commodities

FUELS	CLOSE	PREV.	YTD
Crude Oil (bbl)	103.41	95.72	+37.50%
Natural Gas (mm btu)	4.57	4.40	+22.60%
Unleaded Gas (gal)	3.09	2.80	+38.61%

METALS	CLOSE	PREV.	YTD
Gold (oz)	1,942.40	1,899.40	+6.29%
Silver (oz)	25.53	24.36	+9.46%

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Foreign Exchange

ForEx in U.S. \$	U.S. \$ in ForEx	PREV.	CLOSE	WEEK
Britain	1.3315	.7510	Prime rate	3.25 3.25
Canada	.7848	1.2741	3-mo. T-Bill	0.32 0.38
China	.1584	6.3126	6-mo. T-Bill	0.60 0.66
Euro	1.1124	.8990	5-yr T-Note	1.56 1.85
Japan	.008706	114.86	10-yr T-Note	1.72 1.97
Mexico	.048460	20.6356	30-yr T-Bond	2.11 2.31

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Global Markets

CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	%YTD
Frankfurt	13,904.85	-556.17	-3.85% -12.46%
London	7,330.20	-128.05	-1.72% -.74%
Hong Kong	22,761.71	+48.69	+.21% -2.72%
Nikkei	26,844.72	+317.90	+1.20% -6.76%

Stocks of Local Interest

STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD	STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD
AMC Entertainment A (AMC)	18.32	-.54	-32.6		JPMorgan Chase (JPM)	136.45	-.53	-13.8	
AT&T Inc (T)	23.53	-.16	-4.3		Kaman (KAMN)	40.63	-2.78	-5.8	
Adv Micro Dev (AMD)	113.83	-9.51	-20.9		Keycorp (KEY)	22.99	-2.08	-.6	
American Airlines Gp (AAL)	16.29	-.96	-5.3		Lincoln Natl Corp (LNC)	62.28	-.54	-8.8	
Amphenol Corp (APH)	74.12	-.89	-15.3		Lucid Group Inc (LCID)	24.99	-.39	-34.3	
Annaly Capital Mgmt (NLY)	6.97	+.01	-10.9		MGM Resorts Intl (MGM)	41.92	-.27	-6.6	
Apple Inc (AAPL)	163.20	-.92	-8.1		MetLife Inc (MET)	64.44	-.31	+3.1	
Avangrid Inc (AGR)	44.13	-.74	-11.5		Mullen Automotive (MULN)	1.03	-.66	-80.3	
Avenue Therapeutics (ATXI)	.61	+.27	-33.1		Novartis AG (NVS)	87.12	-.34	-.4	
Bank of America (BAC)	42.47	-.73	-4.5		Nvidia Corporation (NVDA)	234.77	-.908	-20.2	
Barnes Group (B)	43.77	-.268	-6.1		Occid Petl (OXY)	46.79	+.036	+61.4	
Barrick Gold (GOLD)	23.46	+.89	+23.5		Palantir Technol (PLTR)	12.18	+.33	-33.1	
Booking Holdings (BKNG)	207.00	-100.25	-13.6		Peoples Utd Fncl (PBCT)	19.43	-.65	+9.0	
Brist My Sqb (BMY)	68.63	-.04	+10.1		Pfizer Inc (PFE)	45.75	-.19	-22.5	
CTI BioPharma (CTIC)	3.10	+.20	+25.0		Pitney Bowes (PBI)	4.91	-.07	-25.9	
CVS Health Corp (CVS)	102.05	-.60	-1.1		Prudential Fncl (PRU)	105.78	-.588	-2.3	
Carnival Corp (CCL)	18.86	-.147	-6.3		Pub Svc Ent Gp (PEG)	64.46	-.37	-3.4	
Carrier Global Corp (CARR)	43.72	-.16	-19.4		Range Resources (RRRC)	23.77	+.82	+33.3	
Charter Communic (CHTR)	594.74	-.704	-8.8		Raytheon Technol (RTX)	102.73	+.03	+19.4	
Cigna Corp (CI)	237.10	-.68	+3.3		Rogers Corp (ROG)	273.00	
Citigroup (C)	58.59	-.64	-3.0		SS&C Technologies (SSNC)	74.38	-.59	-9.3	
Cleveland-Cliffs Inc (CLF)	23.30	+.94	+7.0		SoFi Technologies (SOFI)	11.20	-.25	-29.2	
Comcast Corp A (CMCSA)	46.39	-.37	-7.8		Sthwstn Energy (SWN)	5.15	+.16	+10.5	
Disney (DIS)	145.70	-.276	-5.9		Stanley Black & Deck (SWK)	158.04	-.466	-16.2	
DraftKings Inc (DKNG)	23.52	-.16	-14.4		Starwood Prop Trust (STWD)	23.25	-.59	-4.3	
EMCOR Group Inc (EME)	111.24	-.430	-12.7		Sundia Growers Inc (SNDL)	.51	-.01	-12.5	
Enveric Biosciences (ENVB)	.31	+.04	-66.7		Terex Corp (TEX)	38.66	-.262	-12.0	
Ethan Allen (ETD)	25.44	-.62	-3.2		Travelers Cos (TRV)	167.82	-.401	+7.3	
Eversource Energy (ES)	80.44	-.136	-11.6		United Rentals (URI)	313.04	-.858	-5.8	
Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM)	79.17	+.75	+29.4		UnitedHealth Group (UNH)	476.25	+.38	-5.2	
Fst Horizon Natl (FHN)	23.44	-.04	+43.5		Viatris Inc (VTRS)	10.15	-.86	-25.0	
Ford Motor (F)	16.70	-.86	-19.6		Virtus Invest (VRTS)	231.40	-.922	-22.1	
FuelCell Energy (FCEL)	6.10	+.10	+17.3		Voya Financial (VOYA)	63.22	-.413	-4.7	
GBS Inc (GBS)	.69	+.23	-51.9		Webster Financial (WBS)	55.85	-.436	...	
Gen Dynamics (GD)	233.32	-.13	+11.9		Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	50.29	-.308	+4.8	
Gen Electric (GE)	92.33	-.318	-2.3		White Mtns Insur (WMT)	1030.64	-.1956	+1.7	
GoodRx Holdings Cl A (GDRX)	16.74	-10.66	-48.8		World Wrestling Ent (WWE)	59.35	+.09	+20.3	
Guardian Health Sci (GHSI)	.28	+.09	-56.7		XPO Logistics Inc (XPO)	70.84	-.84	-8.5	
Hartford Fin Sv (HIG)	66.49	-.299	-3.7		Xero Holdings Corp (XRX)	18.81	-.90	-16.9	
Honeywell Intl (HON)</									

Big Tech promotes a big lie

By Steve Bucci
The Heritage Foundation

As Big Tech gatekeepers like Google and Amazon face long-overdue scrutiny in Washington for anti-competitive practices that limit choice and reduce quality online, they have resorted to a national-security defense: Breaking us up, they claim, will only help China.

It's an ironic move. These tech giants have extensive, well-documented ties to Beijing, doing high-volume business in China's marketplace, while capitulating to the whims of its government for fear of losing access and status.

Their arguments are an insult to the spirit of American ingenuity, which is driven by innovation unleashed through competition, not by condoning a choke-point of five global corporations that have become ever more complacent as their market power grows.

Innovation comes from all corners, not from a handful of gatekeepers that keep new ideas and services from coming to market. These dominant tech companies are the largest barrier to entry for companies that may have technology concepts critical to solving some of our biggest challenges.

Some bipartisan ideas are moving through Congress that could help prevent dominant platforms such as Amazon, Meta (formerly Facebook), Apple, Microsoft and Google from favoring their own products and services to the detriment of small businesses, innovators and consumers.

The bipartisan effort saw five Republicans vote with Democrats to move legislation out of committee, reflecting the momentum around reining in Big Tech inside the beltway and across the country. According to Gallup poll early this year, 57% of Americans believe the government should increase regulation of Big Tech.

To be clear, the legislative efforts are not about punishing the Big Five because they're big.

It's about addressing harmful behavior that allows them to keep their thumb on the scales to further monopoly status.

Big Tech can argue that these initiatives could jeopardize U.S. leadership over China and compromise user data all they want, but that's nonsense. There are clear national security provisions being considered to prevent the transfer of data to



Steve Bucci of The Heritage Foundation says Big Tech has failed to uphold basic tenets of privacy and security. JUSTIN TALLIS/GETTY-AFP 2020

businesses affiliated with the government of China or other governments of foreign adversaries.

Let us not forget that these Big Tech platforms are some of the worst violators of privacy and data security in human history.

Facebook paid a \$5 billion fine for using deceptive practices and sharing its users' personal information without permission with third-party apps.

Google was fined for violating children's privacy laws, and has been accused of secretly tracking users.

Moreover, Big Tech relies heavily on exploiting China's cheap labor and production. In particular, Apple benefits from cheap labor for its products, stores troves of Chinese consumer data on servers owned by state-owned firms and censors

apps in its app store to appease Chinese government demands.

Apple even brokered a \$275 billion deal to help develop China's economic and technological abilities, but has refused to assist U.S. law enforcement in criminal cases at home.

Similarly, Amazon relies on Chinese forced labor for production of many of its products, censors reviews and ratings to appease the Chinese Communist Party, and has even teamed up with firms that provide surveillance technology to the Chinese government's concentration camps.

Google bent over backward to produce a censored search engine to comply with the strict speech prohibitions required by the Chinese Communist Party, while espousing internet freedom.

Giant tech firms such as Google, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and Apple have had years to be overseas ambassadors for American principles. They've often done exactly the opposite, violating basic tenets of consumer privacy and security and helping a regime whose view on human rights runs directly counter to U.S. ideals and to directly assist their military with things like AI development.

Policymakers must ignore the bogus fearmongering on national security being pushed by Big Tech in an effort to evade accountability. Next time they are told that antitrust begets China's dominance, they would be wise to consider the messenger.

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Russia is a Potemkin superpower



Paul Krugman

Beware, Vladimir Putin: Spring is coming. And when it does, you'll lose much of whatever leverage you had left.

Before Putin invaded Ukraine, I might have described

the Russian Federation as a medium-size power punching above its weight in part by exploiting Western divisions and corruption, in part by maintaining a powerful military.

Since then, however, two things have become clear. First, Putin has delusions of grandeur. Second, Russia is even weaker than most people, myself included, seem to have realized.

It has long been obvious that Putin desperately wants to restore Russia's status as a Great Power. His already infamous "there is no such thing as Ukraine" speech, in which he condemned Lenin (!) for giving his neighbor what Putin considers a false sense of national identity, made it clear that his aims go beyond recreating the Soviet Union — he apparently wants to recreate the czarist empire. And he apparently thought that he could take a big step toward that goal with a short, victorious war.

So far, it hasn't worked out. Ukrainian resistance has been fierce; Russia's military has been less effective than advertised. I've been especially struck by reports that the early days of the invasion were hampered by severe logistical problems — that is, the invaders had a hard time providing their forces with the essentials of modern war, above all fuel. It's true that supply problems are common in war; still, logistics is one thing advanced nations are supposed to be really good at.

But Russia is looking less and less like an advanced nation.

The truth is that I was being generous in describing Russia as even a medium-size power. Britain and France are medium-size powers; Russia's gross domestic product is only a bit more than half as large as either one. It seemed remarkable that such an economically underweight state could support a world-class, highly sophisticated military — and maybe it couldn't.

That's not to deny that the force ravaging Ukraine has immense firepower, and it may well take Kyiv. But I wouldn't be surprised if postmortems on the Ukraine war eventually show that there was a lot more rot at the heart of Putin's military than anyone realized.

And Russia is starting to look even weaker economically than it did before it went to war.

Putin isn't the first dictator to make himself an international pariah. As far as I can tell, however, he's the first to do so while presiding over an economy deeply dependent on international commerce

— and with a political elite accustomed, more or less literally, to treating Western democracies as their playground.

For Putin's Russia isn't a hermetic tyranny like North Korea or, for that matter, the old Soviet Union. Its standard of living is sustained by large imports of manufactured goods, mostly paid for via exports of oil and natural gas.

This leaves Russia's economy highly vulnerable to sanctions that might disrupt this trade, a reality reflected in Monday's sharp plunge in the value of the ruble despite a huge increase in domestic interest rates and draconian attempts to limit capital flight.

Before the invasion it was common to talk about how Putin had created "fortress Russia," an economy immune to economic sanctions, by accumulating a huge war chest of foreign currency reserves. Now, however, such talk seems naive. What, after all, are foreign reserves? They aren't bags of cash. For the most part they consist of deposits in overseas banks and holdings of other governments' debt — that is, assets that can be frozen if most of the world is united in revulsion against a rogue government's military aggression.

True, Russia also has a substantial amount of gold held within the country. But how useful is this gold as a way to pay for things the Putin regime needs? Can you really conduct large-scale modern business with ingots?

Finally, as I noted recently, Russia's oligarchs have stashed most of their assets overseas, making them subject to freezing or seizure if democratic governments can muster the will.

You might say that Russia doesn't need those assets, which is true. But everything Putin has done in office suggests that he considers it necessary to buy oligarchs' support, so their vulnerability is his vulnerability.

Incidentally, one puzzle about Russia's pre-Ukraine image of strength was how a kleptocratic regime managed to have an efficient, effective military. Maybe it didn't?

Still, Putin has one remaining ace in the hole: Feckless policies have made Europe deeply dependent on Russian natural gas, potentially inhibiting the West's response to his aggression.

But Europe mainly burns gas for heat; gas consumption is 2.5 times higher in the winter than it is in the summer. Well, winter will soon be over — and the European Union has time to prepare for another winter without Russian gas if it's willing to make some hard choices.

As I said, Putin may well take Kyiv. But even if he does, he will have made himself weaker, not stronger. Russia now stands revealed as a Potemkin superpower, with far less real strength than meets the eye.

Krugman is a columnist for The New York Times.

Putin and the clash of civilizations



Ross Douthat

When the United States, in its hour of hubris, went to war to remake the Middle East in 2003, Vladimir Putin was a critic of U.S. ambition, a defender of international institutions and multilateralism and national sovereignty.

This posture was cynical and self-interested in the extreme. But it was also vindicated by events, as our failures in Iraq and then Afghanistan demonstrated the challenges of conquest, the perils of occupation, the laws of unintended consequences in war. And Putin's Russia, which benefited immensely from our follies, proceeded with its own resurgence on a path of cunning gradualism, small-scale land grabs amid "frozen conflicts," the expansion of influence in careful, manageable bites. But now it's Putin making the world-historical gamble, embracing a more sinister version of the unconstrained vision that once led George W. Bush astray. And it's worth asking why a leader who once seemed attuned to the perils of hubris would take this gamble now. I assume that Putin is being sincere when he rails against Russia's encirclement by NATO and insists that Western influence threatens the historic link between Ukraine and Russia. And he clearly sees a window of opportunity in the pandemic's chaos, the U.S.' imperial overstretch and an internally divided West.

Still, even the most successful scenario for his invasion of Ukraine — easy victory, no real insurgency, a pliant government installed — seems likely to undercut some of the interests he's supposedly fighting to defend. NATO will still nearly encircle western Russia, more countries may join the alliance, European military spending will rise and more troops and material will end up in Eastern Europe. There will be a push for European energy independence, some attempt at long-term delinking from Russian pipelines and production.

A reformed Russian empire will be poorer than it otherwise might be, more isolated from the global economy, facing a more united West. And again, all this assumes no grinding occupation, no percolating anti-war sentiment at home. It's possible

Putin just assumes the West is so decadent, so easily bought off, that the spasms of outrage will pass and business as usual will resume without any enduring consequences.

But let's assume that he expects some of those consequences, expects a more isolated future. What might be his reasoning for choosing it?

Here is one speculation: He may believe that the age of U.S.-led globalization is ending no matter what; that after the pandemic, certain walls will stay up everywhere; and that the goal for the next 50 years is to consolidate what you can — resources, talent, people, territory —

inside your own civilizational walls.

In this vision, the future is neither liberal world empire nor a renewed Cold War between competing universalisms. Rather, it's a world divided into some version of what Bruno Maçães has called "civilization-states," culturally cohesive great powers that aspire not to world domination, but to become universes unto themselves — each, perhaps, under its own nuclear umbrella.

This idea, redolent of Samuel Huntington's arguments in "The Clash of Civilizations" a generation ago, clearly influences many of the world's rising powers — from the Hindutva ideology of India's Narendra Modi to the turn against cultural exchange and Western influence in Xi Jinping's China. Maçães himself hopes a version of civilizationism will reanimate Europe, perhaps with Putin's adventurism as a catalyst for stronger continental cohesion. And even within the United States, you can see the resurgence of economic nationalism and the wars over national identity as a turn toward these kind of civilizational concerns.

In this light, the invasion of Ukraine looks like civilizationism run amok, a bid to forge by force what Russian nationalist writer Anatoly Karlin dubs "Russian world" — meaning "a largely self-contained technological civilization, complete with its own IT ecosystem ... space program, and technological visions ... stretching from Brest to Vladivostok."

The goal is not world revolution or world conquest, in other words, but civilizational self-containment — a unification of "our own history, culture and spiritual space," as Putin put it in his war speech

— with certain erring, straying children dragged unwillingly back home.

But if your civilization-state can't attract its separated children with persuasion, can they really be kept inside with force? Even if the invasion succeeds, won't much of Ukraine's human capital — the young and talented and ambitious — find ways to flee or emigrate, leaving Putin to inherit a poor, wrecked country filled with pensioners? And to the extent that the nationalist vision of Russian self-sufficiency is fundamentally fanciful, might not Putin's supposedly greater Russia end up instead as a Chinese client or vassal, pulled by Beijing's stronger gravity into a more subordinate relationship the more its ties to Europe break?

These are the long-term challenges even for a Putinism that accepts autarky and isolation as the price of pan-Russian consolidation. But for today, and for as many days as Ukrainians still fight, the hope should be that he never gets a chance to deal with long-term problems — that the history that he imagines himself making is made instead in his defeat.

Douthat is a columnist for The New York Times.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

UCONN – North Eagleville Road & Discovery Drive Intersection Improvements INVITATION TO BID

Dimeo Construction Company, the Construction Manager, is soliciting Bids To Award for the University of Connecticut North Eagleville Road & Discovery Drive Intersection Improvements Project (Project Number 300169). This project consists of traffic signalization work including associated sitework and concrete located (excludes prequalified electrical) located in Storrs, CT. We are bidding one package 02A General Trades – SET ASIDE which includes both the sitework and concrete work. Construction to start in Summer of 2022 with a substantial completion in Fall of 2022. This project will be performed under a Project Labor Agreement (PLA). This package has an estimated budget of \$151,000. For bid packages over \$500,000.00 and each section annotated, that went through a prequalification, on the prequalified bidders can provide a bid. For packages identified as "SET-ASIDE", only Small Business Enterprises (SBE) and Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) certified in the State of Connecticut DAS Supplier Diversity Program can provide bids. All other bid packages are available to the public for bidding. Bid package documents can be found at www.dimeo.com under the PROCUREMENT link at the bottom of the web page, which will take you to a Building Connected site. If you do not have an account, you will be required to set one up. Bid documents will be made available on or about February 28, 2022. RFI cutoff date is March 8, 2022 by 2PM. Bid due date is March 22, 2022. Bids must be delivered in sealed envelope to the Dimeo Construction Company, New Haven, CT office, 700 State Street, New Haven, CT prior to 11:00AM. Refer to the Invitation to Bidders in Division 00 of the specifications for more specific instructions and which trades are due on each day. All prime contractors working on the project must utilize Small Business Enterprises (SBE) and Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) certified by the State of Connecticut DAS Supplier Diversity Program, to meet the goal of 30% allocation to SBE's, of which 10% must be allocated to MBE's only. Provide certifications with bids for Sub-Tier and Set-Aside packages. Small and Minority Businesses (S/MBE) are encouraged to apply/bid. For additional information on certifying as an S/MBE in Connecticut, please visit the following link: <http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=34> S/MBE. Contact info@dimeo.com for the following information: If you have any questions, please contact Luke George at Dimeo Construction Company at 401-781-9800 or George@Dimeo.com DIMEO CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/ EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Regional School District #18 is requesting proposals for qualified companies to provide food service management services. Proposals will be received at the office of the Business Manager of Regional School District No. 18, 49 Lyne Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06311 until 3:00 pm on Friday, April 8, 2022 at which time no further proposals will be accepted. Request for Proposal forms may be obtained from the Regional School District #18 website at <https://www.region18.org/district-information/administration>. Information concerning this Request for Proposal may be obtained by contacting Holly McCalla at (860) 434-7238. Regional School District #18 is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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East Hartford

Denise L. Kiernan

Ira L. Osu**Enfield**

Arlene M. Kinnin

Hartford

Rosanne Dolinsky
Ira L. Osu

Manchester

Sharon Meyers

Marlborough

Scudder J. Evans

New Britain

Genevieve L. Arbour
Steven W. Kowalski

Sharon Meyers**Carol Ravagnani**

Margaret Solomon

Newington

John P. Noonan
No Additional Town

Rabbi John R. Nimon**Other Towns in CT**

John L. Barnard, Sr.

Leonard J. Caya

Lynne T. Fredrickson

James M. Gilligan

Walter Sekorski

Margaret Solomon

Plainville

Timothy Scanlon

Suffield

Irene E.

Abbott Destefano

West Hartford

Mark D. Archambault

Rosanne Dolinsky

John P. Noonan

Wethersfield

Maria Bonee

Thomas A. Jerome

Josephine Scott

Maximo Silva

OUT OF STATE

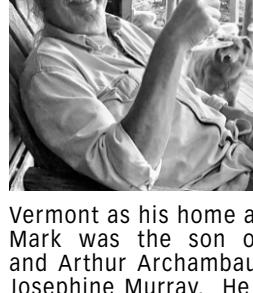
Mark D. Archambault

Jeffersonville, VT

Rabbi John R. Nimon

Lynchburg, VA

* Denotes name listing only.
Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

OBITUARIES**Archambault, Mark David**

Mark David Archambault, 66, of Jeffersonville, Vermont passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, February 9th, 2022. Mark was born August 30, 1955, grew up in West Hartford, Connecticut, attending Northwest Catholic High School. He was a graduate of St. Michael's College in Vermont, Class of 1977. After college, Mark adopted

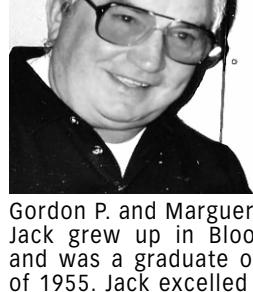
Vermont as his home and Vermont adopted him.

Mark was the son of Helen (Murray) Archambault and Arthur Archambault, and the devoted nephew of Josephine Murray. He was cherished by his extended family, including many cousins, and was Godfather to Julie (Egan) Briere, Julia Marie Nuzzo and Isobel Nuzzo. Mark leaves behind numerous dear and special friends from all decades of his life. His wit, humor, candor, unique perspectives, loyalty, and kind heart endeared Mark to those fortunate enough to know him. Mark was a passionate and skillful skier and served on the Ski Patrol at Smuggler's Notch Resort in Vermont for 40 years. He traveled the world enjoying the challenge of skiing on many of the world's greatest mountains. He taught and mentored many young patrollers, teaching them not only the skill but the responsibilities that came with the job. He excelled at what he did – and was respected across the country and globally.

During the summer, Mark enjoyed wind surfing and kayaking on Lake Champlain. He was a partner in Notch Country Construction for 30 years, and co-owned Appletree Tree Bay Resort for several years. Music and dancing were a big part of Mark's life, especially following The Grateful Dead. He traveled over 50 years to attend shows, laugh with friends, and dance to the music.

Mark's love of animals started early and especially his love of golden retrievers. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations be made to the ASPCA. A celebration of life will be held in Jeffersonville, Vermont on Sunday, March 27 at Smuggler's Notch Resort, 5:00pm. Details to follow on a future service in Connecticut.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

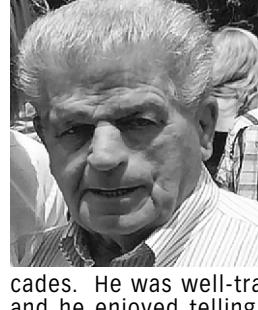
Barnard, Sr., John L.

John L. "Jack" Barnard, Sr., 86, of Waterford and previously of Bloomfield (where the Barnard Family has been in residence since the early 1600's), husband of 54 years to the late Loretta C. (Cummings) Barnard, passed away at his home on Sunday, February 27, 2022, surrounded by his loving family. Jack was born on October 2, 1935, in Hartford, son to

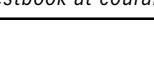
Gordon P. and Marguerite (Lodovico) Barnard. Jack grew up in Bloomfield, attended local schools and was a graduate of Bloomfield High School, Class of 1955. Jack excelled at sports and attended reading, writing and (ar)ithmetic classes with just enough frequency to qualify to play ball for the school. After high school, Jack entered the U.S. Army. While serving from 1955-1957, Jack achieved the rank of Private Second class 3 times due to being demoted twice back to Private through absolutely no fault of his own. When he returned home, Jack worked as a milkman and, at that time, met his loving wife, Loretta. At some point they had 4 children but that was the 1960's, so things are a little fuzzy. In 1976, he founded Northeast Lightning Protection Systems, installing lightning protection systems. He owned, operated and was the President until his retirement in 2006. John loved to watch, play all sports throughout his life. He was a devoted Boston Red Sox fan and loved spending his free time outdoors, hunting and fishing. Jack was a longtime member of the Bloomfield Game Club before retiring to his house on the Niantic River. He could be seen on numerous occasions cruising and relaxing out on his boat, enjoying it even more so if someone else had bought a tank of gas. Jack is survived by his four children, James G. "Jim" Barnard and his wife Cathy of Waterford, Linda L. Barnard of Simsbury, Susan B. Wrisley of Somers and John L. Barnard, Jr. of Granby; nine grandchildren, Sara Martin and her husband Matthew, Kevin Barnard, Shannon Barnard, Mariah Barnard, Maggie Barnard, Samantha Barnard, Cole Wrisley, Breena Wrisley and Kayla Wrisley; his brother, Gordon and his wife Elaine Barnard; his sisters-in-law Cathy Barnard of Greenfield, MA and Barbara Beecher of Farmington, CT, as well as numerous nieces, nephews and extended family. In addition to his wife and parents, John was predeceased by his brother, Howard Barnard. Jack had the best life and leaves this world with no regrets. He was well liked by 97% of those that knew him, and nobody really cares about the other 3%. He was ridiculously generous and never once failed to share his opinion. Jack's wit and ability to tell a story with a gleam in his eye will be missed by family and friends alike. A time of visitation will be held on Friday, March 4, 2022, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Carmon Windsor Funeral Home, 807 Bloomfield Ave., Windsor. There will be no formal service. Burial will be held privately. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Bloomfield Ambulance Association, 785 Park Ave., Bloomfield, CT 06002. To leave an online message of condolence for his family, please visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com.



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OBITUARIES**Barzee, Michael A.**

Michael A. Barzee, 83 from Bristol, passed away peacefully on February 27, 2022, after a long illness. He was born in New Haven, CT on July 3, 1938, son of Mary Hartney and John Ward. He was a lifelong resident of Bristol. Mike attended St. Joseph School and Bristol High School. He was employed by Hood Corporation for over 4 decades. He was well-traveled through his employment, and he enjoyed telling of all the places he had been. Mike was a member of the Bristol Polish-American Club. He enjoyed interacting with friends, as he was a great conversationalist, especially while spending time at his local Dunkin Donuts shops. Mike enjoyed playing setback, tennis, horseshoes, outdoor activities, and the beach. He loved cookies. Mike had six children with his wife Arline (Brunet) Barzee. He was predeceased by his eldest child, Michael David Barzee in 2016. His surviving children are James Barzee of Manchester, Commander, (US Navy, retired) Thomas Barzee of Bristol, Dr. Laura Greene (Alan) of Milford, Paul Barzee of Bristol, and Charles "Chuck" Barzee (Krista) of Bristol. Mike is also survived by his brother, Arthur Ward, of Bristol. Mike shared a close, lifelong brotherly bond with Art. He is also survived by his second wife, Deborah (Nightingale) Barzee of Bristol, his dear daughter-in-law Dr. Sarah Barzee of West Hartford, and his four beloved grandchildren Amethyst Barzee, Jack Greene, Brandon Greene, and Michael Lee Barzee. He is deeply respected by his grandchildren as a solid, genuine, principled, loyal, and humorous man, who's legacy will influence them and future generations beyond. Calling hours will be held at O'Brien Funeral Home, 24 Lincoln Ave. Bristol on Friday, March 4, 2022, from 4PM – 7PM. Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2022 at 9AM from O'Brien Funeral Home to St. Gregory Church, Bristol, for a Mass of Christian Burial at 10AM. Burial will follow at St. Joseph Cemetery, Bristol. In lieu of flowers please donate to St. Gregory Church, 235 Maltby Street, Bristol, CT 06010. To leave an online message of condolence, share a memory or a photo, please visit Mike's tribute page at www.O'Brien-FuneralHome.com



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Solomon, Margaret

Margaret Joan Solomon also known as Margaret Joan Crowley, age 83, died on February 18, 2022 at the Geer Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in N. Canaan, CT, after a long illness. She was born January 25, 1939 in New Britain, CT to the late Kathleen (Crowley) and Charles Solomon. She attended St. Joseph School in New Britain and graduated from Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford in 1956. She received her B.A. from Trinity College in Washington, D.C. in 1960. She enjoyed her college years and made many lifelong friends at Trinity. After graduation, she held a variety of jobs in editing and teaching in the Boston and New York City areas. In 1970 she married the love of her life Steven Neuwirth in New York City. They relocated to St. Louis, Missouri for several years so that Steve could pursue his doctorate at Washington University. Upon completion of his degree Steve accepted a job as a professor at Western Connecticut State University and they moved to Kent, Connecticut. Margaret Joan worked for a time as a consultant to the Connecticut State Department of Education. She eventually opened her own educational consulting business often assisting educational organizations with grant writing projects. During this time she also earned a Ph.D. in educational psychology from Columbia University in New York City. In her later years she became a patients' rights advocate in local nursing homes and was involved in a variety of volunteer activities in Kent.

Known to her family as Joanie and her friends as Margaret, she loved books, art of all kinds, traveling, visiting New York City, being with friends and family, and traveling. She and Steve spent a year in England after he was granted a Fulbright scholarship. They then traveled throughout Europe. She and Steve enjoyed getting together with family and friends in local restaurants and at their home and engaging in lively conversations for hours. Their home was filled with books, interesting conversations, good humor, and good food. Family was very important to her. Margaret Joan kept in contact with all her extended family, the Neuwirths, her Crowley relatives, both nieces and nephews and her Crowley and Maguire cousins. She would often spend Thanksgiving with the Crowleys in New York City and often visited her Maguire cousins at Black Point Beach in Niantic in the summer. She also kept in contact with many of her friends from Trinity College. Margaret Joan was predeceased by her parents Kathleen (Crowley) and Charles Solomon, her husband Steven Neuwirth, her two brothers, Russell Solomon, and Richard Crowley, and her uncle James C. Crowley who cared for her after the early deaths of both her parents. She is survived by many Crowley cousins and nieces and nephews, among them Catherine of New York City, Susie of Boston, and Richard of Vermont. She is also survived by the family of Maguire cousins she grew up with, June Maguire Wiehn of Tolland, CT, Joyce Maguire Atcheson of Marietta, Georgia, and Jeffrey Maguire of Avon, CT.

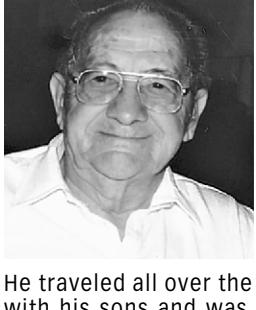
Funeral Services were private and handled by the Lillis Funeral Home, 58 Bridge St., New Milford, CT. Donations may be made in her memory to Trinity Washington University (formerly Trinity College in Washington, D.C.) 125 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington D.C. or to the Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter, 200 Executive Blvd S #46, Southington, Ct 06489.

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Dolinsky, Rosanne (Kaplan)

Rosanne Kaplan Dolinsky passed away peacefully on February 24, 2022 at the age of 93. A long-time resident of the Hartford area, she was predeceased by her husband, Jack Dolinsky. She was the proud matriarch of her family, leaving her son, Paul Dolinsky and daughter, Janis Krissinger and their spouses Diana Garey and Ken Krissinger and grandchildren Laura Dolinsky, Michelle Dolinsky, Elizabeth Krissinger and Andrew Krissinger, as well as her great grandchildren from Michelle and Amin Davari, Charlie and Tennyson. Rosanne was the daughter of world boxing champion Louis "Kid" Kaplan and Bessie Kaplan. A graduate of Weaver High School, she pursued a career in dental hygiene. Her focus was her family and friends with a passion for entertaining. She was also an accomplished writer of personal notes, poems and presentations, often representing her famous father. Rosanne was active in the Jewish community and volunteered for organizations such as Hadassah and ORT. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. She was laid to rest at a private burial attended by immediate family. Donations in her memory may be made to Hadassah.

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Caya, Leonard J.

Leonard J. Caya, 95, of Willimantic, CT, husband of Isabelle (Bushey) Caya for 31 years, passed away Sunday, February 27, 2022. He was born on May 13, 1926 in Willimantic, the son of the late Ovid (David) and Lea (Lussier) Caya. Leonard was a proud World War II Navy Vet on the USS General W.A. Mann AP-112.

He traveled all over the world. He enjoyed boy scouting with his sons and was an Asst. Scout Master of Troop 33. He loved gardening, genealogy, bowling, golfing and camping with his family. Leonard enjoyed traveling in retirement going to places like Alaska, Hawaii and many trips with the Willimantic senior center. In addition to his wife, Leonard is survived by six children, Joseph Caya (Norah), Nancy Breault (Arthur), David Caya (Cindy), Bonnie Sikoski (Mike), Salli Maglio (Michael), Terri Richard (Daniel); step-children Louise Locke and John Hayes (Tina); a sister, Theresa Buell, of Eastford, half brother Raymond Therrier; he also leaves behind many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his first wife of 40 years Evelyn Moseley, two brothers, Rodger Caya and Maurice Caya, his son Kenneth Caya and stepdaughter Michelle Aceto.

Leonard's family will receive relatives and friends on Friday, March 4, 2022 at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. from 10:00am to 11:00am. His Funeral Service will begin at 11:00 at the funeral home. His burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana. www.nationalww2museum.org/give. For an online memorial guestbook please visit www.potterfuneralhome.com.

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Evans, Scudder J.

Scudder Jameson Evans, 28, of Marlborough, CT passed away suddenly on February 14, 2022. He was born May 10, 1993 in Hartford, CT to Kip B. and Sarah S. Evans. He attended RHAM for the majority of his education, but ultimately graduated from New Haven Adult Ed. Scudder was a registered organ donor, People to People Student Ambassador alumnus, and was taking cybersecurity classes. He enjoyed watching sports and was a fervent New England Patriots and Boston Red Sox fan. He spent many years playing baseball, football, lacrosse, and basketball. He loved to snowboard, which endlessly irritated his extended family of committed skiers. Scudder also loved sailing the New England coast with his family every summer while growing up. He loved to travel and had hoped to go on a Safari. He was an avid gamer and, like his father, tinkered with electronics. Scudder was also a passionate 1990s rap and hip-hop fan, and had a sense of style that reflected these influences. Like so many others, Scudder struggled with opioid use disorder and was constantly tested with unpredictable life events that played a role in compromising his sobriety. Scudder found success in completing high school while at Turnbridge, New Haven and meanin

g a community service program by delivering furniture to families in need. Scudder often spoke of how he loved seeing the children's reactions as they received these basic items typically taken for granted. He leaves behind his mother Sarah Scudder Evans and sister Bree Auld Evans. He also leaves behind his great uncle Brent E. Scudder, aunt and uncle Linda and Jack Casey, aunts Caroline Scudder and Cheryl Otton, and numerous cousins. He was predeceased by his father Kip B. Evans, all four grandparents, uncle Timothy T. Scudder, and his beloved dog Dutch. The family thanks the Hartford HealthCare Medical Group at Windham Hospital Wound Care Center as well as long-term recovery centers Turnbridge, New Haven and Seabrook House, New Jersey for their care, efforts and continued support of Scudder and the continued on-going support to his family. The family also thanks the many compassionate, dedicated, and supportive first responders who have come to Scudder's aid in times of need. Their professionalism is unparalleled. A celebration of life will be held for Scudder at the Marlborough Country Bakery, 7 Independence Drive, Marlborough, CT 06447 on Saturday, March 19, 2022 at 3:00 pm. Scudder will be buried on Shelter Island, New York at the convenience of the family. Memorial donations may be made to AHM Youth and Family Services, C/O: The AHM Children's Trust Fund Endowment, 25 Pendleton, Drive, Hebron, CT 06248. "Your gift in memory of Scudder will touch the lives of local children and families struggling with substance abuse, and will serve as a lasting tribute to his legacy. For online condolences, please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

OBITUARIES

Osu, Ira Lester

Ira Lester Osu, 41, of East Hartford, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, February 20, 2022, at his home. Born in Hartford on April 17, 1980, son of Patrick Okechukwu Osu and the late Juliet (Tate) Stewart, he was raised in Hartford and attended Hartford Public Schools. Ira was very creative and intelligent and did everything to perfection. He always had goals, always wanted to better himself and never gave up. Although he was a trained graphic artist, Ira preferred to work in sales. He started his career in the auto industry at Lia Hyundai where he worked as a car salesman for over 15 years and most recently had been at Napoli Kia in Milford for the last three years. A self-taught artist, he was amazing at drawing and was a natural rapper. His stage name, "Blacastan", was well-known domestically and internationally. He was a producer for Underground Hip Hop and had a huge following on Facebook and Instagram. Everything Ira did was art and everyone he touched he made better. Ira saw life differently and his vision was profound. He once commented that his creativity was so vivid and complex that what he saw in his mind he could only express 5% percent of it in a picture. Most of all, Ira was a family man and was always very friendly and jovial. He leaves to mourn his passing, his father, Patrick Okechukwu Osu and his wife Blessing of Woodbridge, VA; his fiancé and partner of 12 years, Monika Koziol of East Hartford; five brothers, Dwayne Stewart of Hartford, Patrick Osu, Jr., Alfred Osu, Christopher Osu, and Johnathan Osu of Woodbridge, VA; three special aunts, Rosemarie Tate of West Hartford, Jean Antoinette Jacobs of Windsor, and Doreen Wright of Hartford; six special cousins who were more like brothers and sisters, Andre Wright and his wife Kristi of Cromwell, Stephanie Joy Jacobs of Windsor, Frank A. Jacobs, III of Windsor, Norman "Ricky" Davis and his wife Trudy of West Hartford, Sharmeen "Nikki" Wright of Hartford, and Sharon Bennett of Austin, TX; his fiance's family including her parents who loved him like a son, Henryk and Czeslawa Koziol of New Britain; two nieces, and a host of other relatives and friends. Besides his mother, he was predeceased by his maternal grandmother with whom he shared a special bond, Ethel Tate. His family will receive friends on Thursday, March 3, 9-11 a.m., followed by a Homegoing Service at 11 a.m., at The Lodge Community Chapel, 130 Deerfield Rd., Windsor. Burial will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. Memorial donations may be made to the Ira Osu Memorial Scholarship Fund by visiting, <https://www.tmcfunding.com/funds/ira-osu-memorial-scholarship-fund/6514>. Carmon Windsor Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. For online condolences or to view the service live or after Thursday, March 3rd at 11 a.m., please visit, www.carmonfuneralhome.com.



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Meyers, Sharon

Sharon Meyers, 70, of Manchester, CT died February 19, 2022 after a short illness. She formerly lived in Suffield and New Britain, CT. Sharon was born in New Britain, CT on May 10, 1951, a daughter of the late Clifford R. Meyers and Claire (Gagnon) Meyers. Sharon is survived by her sisters Sandra Johnson and husband Peter of Westbrook, CT, Susan Picard and husband Paul of Southington, CT, and by her loving significant other, George Russo of Manchester CT. She was also survived by 5 nieces, Kristin Johnson of Enfield CT, Karin Johnson of Portland CT, Paige Sperry and husband Carter, Nicole Pyle and husband Jeffrey, Heather Picard and significant other John Malczynski and his daughter Kaitlynn Malczynski-Griffin all of Southington, CT. In addition, she was survived by great nephews and nieces; Dylan Sperry, Connor Sperry and significant other Lyndsy Ignacio, Everett Sperry, Tanner Sperry, Victoria Sperry, Natalie Pyle, Josh Pyle, and Isabella Picard-Bonney, all of Southington, CT, and Kaisson Johnson of Portland, CT. She is also survived by her aunts; Anita Cefarati of Maryland and Dorothy Pare of Nevada, and numerous cousins and friends. She was predeceased by several aunts and uncles. Sharon worked for North & Judd, Aetna Life Insurance Company, created and managed a computer training business for many years, Hood Ice Cream and finished her career at Bank of America. She enjoyed traveling, walking and watching sports, especially UCONN Women's Basketball. Funeral services will be held at New Britain Memorial Funeral Home, 444 Farmington Ave., New Britain, CT, on Friday, March 4, 2022 from 10:00-11:00am, followed by burial at the Fairview Cemetery in New Britain. For an online memorial, please visit www.NewBritainSaginario.com.

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Scott, Josephine (Lanza)

Josephine (Lanza) Scott, 97, widow of the late Robert L. Scott, died Monday, February 28th, 2022, at the Jefferson House, surrounded by her loving family. Josephine was born in Hartford, the daughter of the late Pasquale and Marie (Capillo) Lanza. Josephine enjoyed socializing, playing cards, bingo, and Wii bowling at the senior center prior to her illness. She was a loving mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, who was always concerned for the well-being of her family. She is survived by her two children, Patricia Sachonchik and husband Walter of Wethersfield, Robert Scott and wife Nancy of Farmington. She had 4 grandchildren, Lori-Ann Fredres and her husband Robert, Robert Scott Jr., Michael Scott, and Melissa Scott and 9 great-grandchildren, Amanda Fredres, Madeline, Brady, Rebekah, Jacob, Benjamin, Cooper, Hailey, and Brooke Scott. She also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, and friends. She was predeceased by 4 brothers and 3 sisters. She was especially fond of her niece (godchild) Shirley Devanney of South Windsor, whom she considered a second daughter. The family would like to extend thanks to the staff at the Jefferson House for their care, especially to Anna in the Recreation Department who showed such kindness and attention to her needs. Friends may call on Friday, March 4th, 2022 from 9:30 to 10:30 am at Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home, 34 Beaver Road, Wethersfield, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 am in Corpus Christi Church, of Christ the King Parish in Wethersfield. Burial will be private. To leave condolences, or for more information, please visit Farleysullivan.com.

Farley-Sullivan

Funeral Home

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Visit the obituary section on courant.com to share memories of loved ones.

Silva, Maximo

Máximo B. Silva, 97, of Wethersfield, passed away on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at Hartford Hospital. He was the beloved husband of Julia (Membrillo) Silva for 72 years. Born in 1924 in Trujillo, Perú, he was the son of the late Bernardo Silva and Teofila Rosado Garcia. A man of many skills, he owned a restaurant in Perú called "El Peruano", a name that would become his own nickname, used affectionately by the other immigrant business owners in the area that knew him. His next business was a store where he, as an entrepreneur, would serve the needs of the community. He was not fearful of new knowledge and would take on a different business each time, even designing crystal chandeliers.

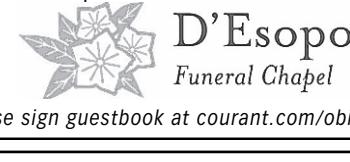
Máximo first came to the U.S. in 1981 with his wife Julia, and ever since there have been many anniversary celebrations and family gatherings that will forever remain in our hearts together with the memory of our beloved Max, who was the heart and organizer of all of the events.

Máximo worked for the State of Connecticut, proudly retiring in 1997 from Prince Tech in Hartford with a beautiful ceremony from his co-workers, receiving a special award that he greatly deserved.

Besides his wife Julia, Máximo is survived by his children, Carlos and Frida Miller of Florida, Rosa Pelaez of Newington, CT, Daniel and Teofila Tovar of Wethersfield, CT and Lea Silva from Broad Brook, CT; 10 grandchildren, Leslie Williams, Erika Stellato, Gerardo Pelaez, Alex Miller, Carlos Miller, Jr., Sean Miller, Amy Miller, Anthony Silva, Daniel Silva and Andrea Tessie Gehen. Our family tree is long and he leaves many close friends and relatives in Perú.

A Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. on Friday (March 4th) at Saint Augustine Church, 10 Campfield Avenue, Hartford. Burial will follow at West Meadow Cemetery, Newington. The family will receive relatives and friends prior to the Mass from 9 to 11 a.m. on Friday at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield.

To leave a message for the family or view Máximo's tribute movie, please visit the obituary page at www.desopofuneralchapel.com



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Noonan, John P. "Jack"

John P. Noonan, known as Jack to everyone, passed away, with his family by his side, on February 27, 2022, after a lengthy battle with pancreatic cancer. Jack was born in 1938, the son of Patrick and Maureen Noonan and was raised in Hartford. In 1958 he met the love of his life, Joanne Barone, on a blind date. That same year Jack entered the Army and served two years at Ft. Dix

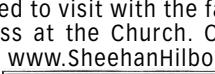
and on the Eniwetok Atoll and served an additional four years in the Army Reserve. After returning home Jack and Joanne were wed and began their 60 plus years of marriage in 1961. They went on to raise their family at homes in Hartford and West Hartford before settling into their empty nest in Newington. Jack retired from the West Hartford Fire Department in 1992 after a 30-year career. He was honored as the Fire Fighter of the Year in 1986.

Besides his wife, Joanne Noonan, he leaves behind his loving daughters, Christine Noonan of Branford, and Mary-Lynn Michaud, along with her husband Michael Michaud and the apple of his eye, his granddaughter Tess Michaud, all of West Hartford. He also leaves his brother Robert Noonan and sister Kathy Noonan, along with many nieces and nephews. He was pre-deceased by his parents and sister Maureen Grogan.

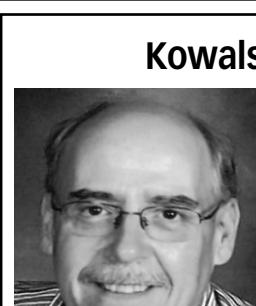
Jack's life was filled with a strong faith, lots of friends, some of the best (and worst) Dad jokes of all time, music, dance and traveling with his wife. His last adventure was battling his disease, which he faced with positivity and acceptance. His journey was made so much more bearable because of his Oncologist, Dr. Rawad Elias and his main infusion nurse, Tiffany Woods.

Jack lit up the cancer center at every visit with his yellow Crocs. His family is so appreciative of the care and support he received. Jack and his family have requested that in lieu of flowers, his friends support two of his favorite charities. Please consider a donation in Jack's memory to The Miracle League of Connecticut, Inc. at <https://www.miracleleaguect.org/donate/> or by mail to 68 S. Main St. BSMT 100, West Hartford, CT 06107 or to The Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital at <https://giving.hartfordhospital.org/tributegifts>.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 467 S. Quaker Lane in West Hartford on Saturday, March 5, 2022 at 10 am. Entombment will follow at the Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery mausoleum in Bloomfield. There will be no calling hours. Family and friends are invited to visit with the family one half hour prior to the Mass at the Church. Online condolences may be made at www.SheehanHilbornBreen.com

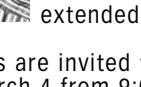


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Kowalski, Steven W.

Steven W. Kowalski, 67, of Kensington, passed away on February 28, 2022. He was born in New Britain on November 21, 1954, son of the late Edward, Sr. and Anna (Skorupski) Kowalski. Steven is survived by his brother Edward Kowalski, Jr. and his wife Brenda; as well as several cousins and the extended family on Brenda's side.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Steven's family on Friday, March 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Burritt Hill, 332 Burritt St., New Britain. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. in St. Paul's Church, Kensington. Burial will follow in Sacred Heart Cemetery, New Britain. Memorial donations in Steven's name may be made to either the Sacred Heart Church, 158 Broad St., New Britain, CT 06053 or St. Paul's Church, 461 Alling St., Berlin, CT 06037. To share a condolence with his family, please visit www.duksa.net.



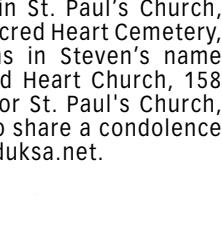
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**Abbott DeStefano, Irene E. (Hebert)**

Irene Ellen (Hebert) Abbott DeStefano of Suffield passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 27, 2022. Irene was born October 30, 1936, in Pawtucket, RI, a daughter of Charles and Bernadette Hebert. She lived in Pawtucket and Rumford, RI, prior to moving to Suffield. The widow of Ronald R. Abbott and Anthony DeStefano, Irene

is survived by her daughters, Sandy Abbott Chmiel (Nick) and Linda A. Mills. She was the proud memé of Renée Chmiel, Jim Chmiel (Sarah), Kevin Chmiel, Ashley Mills, and Christopher Mills. Irene leaves her beloved sister, Marion Milos, and several nephews and nieces. She was predeceased by her sister, Joan Previte, and brothers Charles, Raymond, and John Hebert. An avid sports fan, Irene especially loved the Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots, and "her girls," the UCONN Huskies women's basketball team. She also enjoyed breakfasts at Friendly's, lunch with her friends, and scratch-off lottery tickets.

Per her request, there will be no funeral or calling hours. Her family would like to thank the very kind caregivers of AccentCare Hospice, Heaven's Hands Home Care, and Stonebrook Village for their help in making Irene comfortable in her final days. Memorial donations may be made to Suffield Community Aid, 450 South Street, Suffield, CT 06078. Heritage Funeral Home, Suffield has been entrusted with the arrangements. For online condolences please visit: www.SuffieldFuneralHome.com

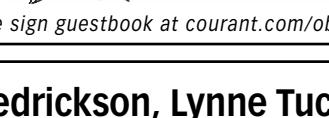
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Bonee, Marie (Russo)

Marie (Russo) Bonee, 96, of Wethersfield, beloved wife for 57 years of the late Peter A. Bonee, passed away peacefully on Monday, February 28, 2022. Born in Hartford on July 25, 1925, she was the daughter of the late Donato and Rose (Santoli) Russo and had lived in the area all her life. Marie was a graduate of Bulkeley High School. She worked for the city of Hartford for many years.

A loving mother and grandmother, Marie will be forever missed by her two children, Peter A. Bonee, Jr. and wife Christina of San Jose, CA and Marabeth Fitzgerald and husband Michael of Wethersfield and her two adored grandchildren, Sean and Cherie Fitzgerald. She is also survived by her sister, Teresa Campeau of Malibu, CA and her sister-in-law, Mary Russo of Tolland, as well as several nieces and nephews and her beloved friend and caregiver, Admira Hodzic. She was predeceased by her brother, Anthony Russo and her sister, Antoinette Liguidge.

Calling hours will be Friday (March 4) from 12-1 p.m. concluding with a Prayer Service at 1 p.m. at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield. Burial will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. Donations in Marie's memory may be made to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Drive, Wallingford, CT 06492. To share a memory of Marie with her family, please visit www.desopofuneralchapel.com.

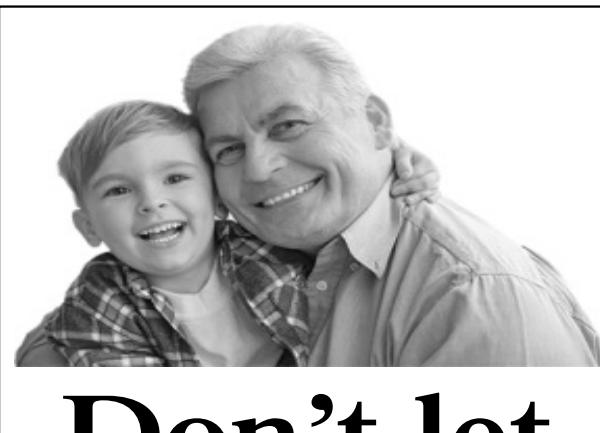


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Fredrickson, Lynne Tucker

Lynne Tucker Fredrickson, 67, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family and friends on February 26, 2022, at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. She was born June 13, 1954 in New London, CT. Lynne grew up in Madison, CT and spent her adult years along the shoreline. Lynne was very passionate about her politics and loved the many pets she had over the years. She had a career as a massage therapist which brought her much joy. Lynne was predeceased by her father, Russell Tucker and her brother, R. Timothy Tucker Jr. She is survived by her mother, Marilyn Robinson, her brother, John Tucker, and her sister, Laura Tucker. Lynne is survived by her three children, Robert Kelsey Jr. (Jill), Daniel Kelsey (Andrew Seguel), and Laura Lynne Cohen (David). Lynne was a loving and devoted "Bubby" to her grandchildren, Matthew, Rachel, and Grace Cohen. She also leaves five step-grandchildren Devin and Megan Daley, Anna, Jake, and Sam Cohen, all of whom she cared for greatly. Lynne is also survived by her best friend Sue Swanson who she knew and loved for most of her life. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, March 3, 2022 at Saint Margaret Church, 24 Academy Street in Madison at 11:00AM. Burial will follow in the Resurrection Cemetery in Westbrook. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made in Lynne's name to the American Cancer Society. To share a memory or send a condolence to her family please visit www.rwwfh.com. Arrangements are in the care of the Robinson, Wright & Weymer Funeral Home in Centerbrook.

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OBITUARIES

Ravagnani, Carol



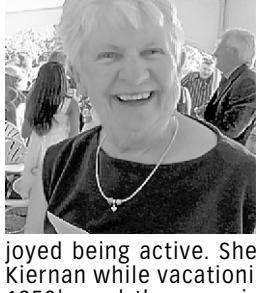
Carol Ravagnani passed away on March 1st. Born on July 29, 1949, she was the only child of Anna (Matulis) Samsel and Stanley Samsel. Born and raised in New Britain, Carol attended local schools and graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in 1967. Carol knew early on in life that education was her passion and that she was born to teach. With this goal in mind, she received BS in education from Central Connecticut State University. She then went on to receive a Masters Degree, a Sixth Year Degree and a Seventh Year Degree, all from Central. In addition to a certificate in Elementary Education, she also received certification in Reading and Administration / Supervision. Carol secured a teaching position in New Britain and began her career at the Israel Putnam School. She then held positions at Roosevelt Junior High, Pulaski Middle School, Smalley Elementary School and Northend Elementary School where she served as principal. Smalley School was her favorite assignment and most of her thirty-five year career was spent in her fourth grade classroom at Smalley. She was never happier than when she was teaching, using many innovative techniques to capture her students' interest. These sometimes unorthodox yet creative methods led to the receipt of some very prestigious awards for excellence in teaching. Carol was the recipient of Connecticut's Celebration of Excellence Award in three separate years. She was named New Britain's Teacher of the Year, Social Studies Teacher of the Year, CCSU's Outstanding Alumni, and in 1990 was the recipient of the Milken Award for Excellence. Although her life revolved around teaching, Carol was fortunate to find and marry the love of her life, her husband Albert. This union provided Carol, who had no family of her own, a readymade one in Al's three grown daughters, sons in law and grandchildren. This addition made her life complete. Carol's interests were numerous and varied. She was an avid gardener and needle crafter and also a voracious reader. She made unique Lithuanian and Ukrainian Easter eggs to give as gifts to family and friends. Holidays were always bountiful at her home as she loved to cook and bake. No one ever left her home without enough leftovers to feed a third world nation. She also loved to write poems and no holiday was complete without her specially written, personalized graces. She loved writing and recently wrote a book about her most memorable teaching experiences. Carol and Albert enjoyed their retirement and went on numerous memorable trips. She also enjoyed fishing with Albert and spent many happy hours in Long Island Sound aboard their boat, the Holy Mackerel. Predeceased by her parents, Anna and Stanley, Carol leaves her husband Albert Ravagnani to whom she was married for twenty-five years, step daughters Darlene Makuch and her husband Thomas, Debra Setzko and her husband John, and Doreen Revoir and her husband Scott. She also leaves five grandchildren, Felix Revoir, Jenna Escales and her husband Scott, Jessica Parlapiano and her husband Phil, Kyle Setzko and Evan Setzko. She also leaves two great grandchildren, Nathan and Ryan Parlapiano. Carol was a member of St. Andrew's Church which is part of the Holy Apostles Parish in New Britain. Funeral services for Carol will be held Friday (March 4) with a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:30AM at Holy Apostle Parish (St. Andrew's Church) 396 Church St. New Britain. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery 1141 Stanley St. New Britain. Visitation will be held Friday from 9:00 - 11:00 AM at the Farrell Funeral Home, 110 Franklin Sq. New Britain. Memorial donations in her name may be made to Holy Apostles Parish, 1010 Slater Road New Britain 06053 or to Central Connecticut State University, 1615 Stanley Street 06053 to be directed to the Department of Education. To send a condolence, please visit, www.FarrellFuneralHome.com

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Kiernan, Denise L.



Denise L. (Godbout) Kiernan, 90, widow of Francis J. Kiernan, of East Hartford entered into God's care on Saturday, February 26, 2022, surrounded by her family. Denise was born in Saint Anne de Beaupre, Quebec, Canada and was the daughter of the late Gerard and Yvonne (Boisvert) Godbout. In her early years, Denise loved to ski and enjoyed being active. She met the love of her life, Frank Kiernan while vacationing in New Hampshire in the late 1950's and they married soon after. Denise moved to the states and became an avid golfer, fantastic cook and an amazing mom. Denise will be remembered for her love of life, her kindness, laughter and ability to make anyone feel welcome in her home. Denise is survived and will be dearly missed by her children; Mark Kiernan and his wife Christine of Hatfield, PA and Maureen Krauss and her husband Jeffrey of Cromwell, CT, a sister-in-law; Elizabeth Avery of Berlin, CT, her precious grandchildren; Matthew, Kevin and Meaghan Kiernan, Kaitlin (Kiernan) McConnell and her husband Alec, and Kristen, Eric, and Kayla Krauss as well as numerous nieces, nephews and dear friends.

A time of visitation will be held Friday, March 4, 2022, from 4 - 7 p.m. at the D'Esopo East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter Street, East Hartford. Please join the family on Saturday, March 5, 2022, for a Mass of Christian burial at 10:00 a.m. in St. Edmond Campion Parish, St. Christopher Campus, 538 Brewer St., East Hartford. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery, East Hartford. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Meriden Humane Society, 311 Murdock Ave., Meriden, CT 06450 or the First Tee, PO Box 3055, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004. To extend online expressions of sympathy, please visit desopoeh.com.

 D'Esopo
Funeral Chapel

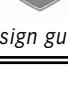
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Nimon, Rabbi John R.

Rabbi John R. Nimon, 72, of Lynchburg, Virginia died at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville, VA on Sunday, February 27, 2022. Rabbi Nimon, the son of the late Joseph and Esther Nimon, leaves behind his wife Lisa Barker Rosenfield, his sister Wendy Weber of Toronto, Canada, his mother-in-law Naomi Barnett, his four children Yael(Douglas) Katzman, Aliza(Ted) Nannicelli, Sam Nimon, and Rina Nimon(Rich Cummings), and his two stepdaughters Julia Rosenfield (Thomas DePalma) and Emily Rosenfield. He is also survived by eight grandchildren Shira and Noah Katzman, Leo, Vin and Asher Nannicelli, Sophia and Anna Nimon, and Paul DePalma. He was predeceased by his first wife Hyla Barnett Nimon.

Rabbi Nimon was born in Toronto, Canada and graduated from York University and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH. He served as Rabbi in several Connecticut congregations, in Mandeville, LA, and for the last 7 years at Agudath Sholom Congregation in Lynchburg, VA, where he was involved in many interfaith and community service organizations.

The funeral will be held on Thursday, March 3rd at 1PM at the B'Nai Abraham Cemetery at 120 Corrigan Avenue, Meriden, CT. Shiva will follow the service at the YMCA at 110 West Main Street in Meriden. Memorial contributions may be made to the Rabbi John R. Nimon Scholarship Fund, Agudath Sholom Congregation, 2055 Langhorne Rd, Lynchburg, VA 24501. Arrangements are under the direction of the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 E. Main St., Meriden, CT 06450. For online condolences, please visit jferryfh.com.



John J. Ferry & Sons
FUNERAL HOME

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Ravagnani, Carol

Carol Ravagnani passed away on March 1st. Born on July 29, 1949, she was the only child of Anna (Matulis) Samsel and Stanley Samsel. Born and raised in New Britain, Carol attended local schools and graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in 1967. Carol knew early on in life that education was her passion and that she was born to teach. With this goal in mind, she received BS in education from Central Connecticut State University. She then went on to receive a Masters Degree, a Sixth Year Degree and a Seventh Year Degree, all from Central. In addition to a certificate in Elementary Education, she also received certification in Reading and Administration / Supervision. Carol secured a teaching position in New Britain and began her career at the Israel Putnam School. She then held positions at Roosevelt Junior High, Pulaski Middle School, Smalley Elementary School and Northend Elementary School where she served as principal. Smalley School was her favorite assignment and most of her thirty-five year career was spent in her fourth grade classroom at Smalley. She was never happier than when she was teaching, using many innovative techniques to capture her students' interest. These sometimes unorthodox yet creative methods led to the receipt of some very prestigious awards for excellence in teaching. Carol was the recipient of Connecticut's Celebration of Excellence Award in three separate years. She was named New Britain's Teacher of the Year, Social Studies Teacher of the Year, CCSU's Outstanding Alumni, and in 1990 was the recipient of the Milken Award for Excellence. Although her life revolved around teaching, Carol was fortunate to find and marry the love of her life, her husband Albert. This union provided Carol, who had no family of her own, a readymade one in Al's three grown daughters, sons in law and grandchildren. This addition made her life complete. Carol's interests were numerous and varied. She was an avid gardener and needle crafter and also a voracious reader. She made unique Lithuanian and Ukrainian Easter eggs to give as gifts to family and friends. Holidays were always bountiful at her home as she loved to cook and bake. No one ever left her home without enough leftovers to feed a third world nation. She also loved to write poems and no holiday was complete without her specially written, personalized graces. She loved writing and recently wrote a book about her most memorable teaching experiences. Carol and Albert enjoyed their retirement and went on numerous memorable trips. She also enjoyed fishing with Albert and spent many happy hours in Long Island Sound aboard their boat, the Holy Mackerel. Predeceased by her parents, Anna and Stanley, Carol leaves her husband Albert Ravagnani to whom she was married for twenty-five years, step daughters Darlene Makuch and her husband Thomas, Debra Setzko and her husband John, and Doreen Revoir and her husband Scott. She also leaves five grandchildren, Felix Revoir, Jenna Escales and her husband Scott, Jessica Parlapiano and her husband Phil, Kyle Setzko and Evan Setzko. She also leaves two great grandchildren, Nathan and Ryan Parlapiano. Carol was a member of St. Andrew's Church which is part of the Holy Apostles Parish in New Britain. Funeral services for Carol will be held Friday (March 4) with a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:30AM at Holy Apostle Parish (St. Andrew's Church) 396 Church St. New Britain. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery 1141 Stanley St. New Britain. Visitation will be held Friday from 9:00 - 11:00 AM at the Farrell Funeral Home, 110 Franklin Sq. New Britain. Memorial donations in her name may be made to Holy Apostles Parish, 1010 Slater Road New Britain 06053 or to Central Connecticut State University, 1615 Stanley Street 06053 to be directed to the Department of Education. To send a condolence, please visit, www.FarrellFuneralHome.com

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MALESEGREEK
ORTHODOXGREEK
ORTHODOX
SIMPLEKNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS

MARINES 2

LIONS
CLUBMETHODIST
CHURCHORTHODOX
COMBINED
CROSSPRAYER
HANDORTHODOX
RUSSIAN
CROSS

STAR OF DAVID



ROTARY

POLICE
BADGECORE
ORGAN
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BOXING



MASONIC



ANGEL



BALLOONS



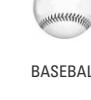
BASEBALL



BASKETBALL



BUTTERFLY

CHECKERED
FLAG

DOVE



EAGLE



FOOTBALL



GOLF

HEART
SHADEDHEART
BLANK

MOTORCYCLE

MUSIC
NOTE

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Female cop pursuing sex harassment suit

Wethersfield officer say pattern of hostility dates several years

By Don Stacom
Hartford Courant

A female patrol officer with the Wethersfield Police Department is suing the town, complaining of years of sexual harassment on the job.

Jessica Blank is accusing several co-workers and supervisors of

harassment, and contends that the department's administration knew about it but didn't act.

"The working environment that the plaintiff is exposed to on a daily basis is hostile and pervasive," according to the suit filed in January in Hartford Superior Court. "There is a clear pattern of discriminatory behavior dating back years."

The lawsuit is the latest problem for the department, which has gone through more than a year of turmoil involving former Chief

James Cetran.

The town fired Cetran last summer and appointed Rafael Medina as his replacement in November, but Cetran is still pursuing a lawsuit to reverse his dismissal.

Blank's lawsuit doesn't cite Cetran by name, but appears to side with his version of a severe rift with then-Town Manager Gary Evans. Evans overrode Cetran's discipline against an officer who had harassed her, Blank claims, but later denied it.

"(Evans) claimed he did not rescind the discipline. This was not true," the suit said.

Blank served 2 1/2 years on the Enfield police force before transferring to Wethersfield in mid-2013. Her lawsuit claims she has been harassed through much of her career since then.

"She has been the target of sexual harassment at the hands of supervisors and other officers with no consequence and retaliated against for speaking up," her attorney, Ronald Pugliese Jr., wrote

in her suit.

"The Wethersfield Police Department and the town of Wethersfield has not taken the plaintiff's complaints seriously, yet is quick to prosecute complaints made against her," according to Pugliese.

Neither Pugliese nor attorney Patrick Allen, who is representing the town, would discuss the suit Tuesday.

"This is pending litigation and

Turn to Lawsuit, Page 2

"Whether the organization is faith-based or not, I am a person of faith. It doesn't matter. Those are my values and approach anyway, even if I don't have to stand in a pulpit to do it."

— Rev. Shelley D. Best



Hartford Rev. Shelley D. Best is the new CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Best to head Greater Hartford Arts Council

By Susan Dunne
Hartford Courant

Hartford Rev. Shelley D. Best has been appointed as the new CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council, the council announced on Tuesday. Best will assume her duties on April 18, succeeding Cathy Malloy, who left the position in September 2020.

Kate McOmber, who has served as interim CEO since Malloy left, will become COO of the Council.

Best has been executive director of The Conference of Churches, a Hartford-based consortium of houses of worship, since 2001. In 2012, she founded 224 EcoSpace, an arts, health and wellness center at 224 Farmington

Will assume role as CEO on April 18

Ave. Best said The Rev. Lydell Brown will be interim CEO of 224 until a permanent CEO is found.

Best is pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. She earned a masters degree in religious leadership from Hartford Seminary; a masters of divinity from Yale University and a doctorate in ministry from Hartford Seminary. Last October, Yale Divinity honored Best with its Distinction in Congregational Ministry Award.

Best, in a phone interview Tuesday, said she was inspired to apply for the

job by her participation, since the early days of the pandemic, in the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Artists of Color Unite venture.

"Through that group, we talked about what was going on in Greater Hartford and that the Arts Council would be seeking a new CEO. I knew the Arts Council wants to emphasize diversity, equity and inclusion. Then I saw the posting and said, ooh, I could do this, I should apply," she said.

"I have to admit it was a faith move on my part, because I wasn't looking for a job. I was content with the Conference. But the opportunity to work with the Arts Council had me wanting to try," she added. "I had the urge to do it on one side, and panic on the other side. I had

Turn to Best, Page 2

Stop & Shop and union reach accord on four-year contract

Deal includes pay boost; some workers hiked to \$19 an hour

By Stephen Singer
Hartford Courant

Stop & Shop workers, battered by COVID-19 and eager to avoid a second strike in three years, have ratified a four-year contract that delivers a \$15 minimum hourly wage a year before Connecticut's higher wage takes effect and boosts pay significantly for workers who fill online orders for curbside pick-up. FILE



Stop & Shop workers have ratified a four-year contract that delivers a \$15 minimum hourly wage a year before Connecticut's higher wage takes effect and boosts pay significantly for workers who fill online orders for curbside pick-up. FILE

ees with at least six months on the job. Part-time workers will be paid a starting rate of \$15 an hour and \$17.30 as a starting rate for full-time employees, according to the union.

Connecticut's minimum wage rises to \$15 an hour on June 1, 2023.

"The company knew we were

bargaining in the shadow of COVID and did not want to reduce costs or change health care," said Keri Hoehne, executive vice president of Local 371 of the UFCW in Westport.

Turn to Contract, Page 2

CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

CDC: Nearly 40% of state residents have had COVID

Study shows 47% of children 17 and younger were afflicted

By Alex Puttermann
Hartford Courant

About 39% of Connecticut residents have had COVID-19 at some point over the past two years, new research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found.

According to the CDC, Connecticut had seen an estimated 1,393,000 COVID-19 residents catch COVID-19 as of the end of January, more than double the number who had officially tested positive by that date. That total includes 47% of children 17 and younger, who have been more likely than other age groups to

catch the disease.

Despite nearly two-fifths of its population having been infected with COVID-19, Connecticut ranks below the national average in per capita infections. Per the CDC, 43% of Americans — or more than 140 million people — had contracted COVID-19 as of the end of January, including 58% of children.

Of 46 states for which data is available, Connecticut ranks 35th in the share of its population that has been infected, according to the CDC.

The new data comes from the CDC's ongoing seroprevalence study, which attempts to quantify the true number of infections nationwide by analyzing blood specimens from all 50 states,

Turn to Coronavirus, Page 2

South Windsor couple guilty of swindling immigrants

By Edmund H. Mahony

Hartford Courant

A South Windsor man pleaded guilty Monday to charges that he and his wife ran businesses that bilked immigrants seeking help with the naturalization process out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Babar Khan pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in New Haven to conspiracy to commit fraud and a federal tax offense. Khatija Khan pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail

fraud in November. Both are awaiting sentencing and face possible imprisonment.

The U.S. Attorney's office said the couple operated two companies created ostensibly to assist clients involved in proceedings with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Many of the clients "are aliens residing in the U.S. without legal status and had limited education, a limited ability to understand English, and little to no knowledge of the documents that the Khans were filing with USCIS on their behalf," the prosecutors said.

Khatija Khan claimed falsely that she was an attorney with a background in immigration matters and she and her husband prepared and mailed immigration petitions containing information they knew was phony, without knowledge of the clients, the prosecutors said.

"Many of the Khans' clients received no relief from USCIS despite paying the Khans significant amounts of money," the U.S. Attorney's office said. "To generate fees from clients, Khatija Khan filed applications with

USCIS even when the submissions lacked merit or a legitimate basis."

Babar Khan is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Stefan R. Underhill on May 23 in Bridgeport. Khan is free on a \$50,000 bond pending sentencing.

Individuals who believe they have been victimized by this scheme can contact Ines Cenatiempo, Victim-Witness Coordinator of the U.S. Attorney's Office, at Ines.Cenatiempo@usdoj.gov or by phone at 203-821-3757.

Coronavirus

from Page 1

Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Through this method, researchers account for not only people who tested positive for COVID-19 but also those who were never tested, whether due to lack of symptoms or lack of available testing.

While the CDC officially estimates that 38.9% of Connecticut residents have had COVID-19, the true figure could fall anywhere between 36.7% and 41.3%, the agency says.

The CDC's estimate of COVID-19 cases in Connecticut is substantially lower than the one published by researchers at the Yale School of Public Health and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. According to their estimates, published at covidestim.org, about 70% of Connecticut's population has been infected since the start of the pandemic.

As of Tuesday, Connecticut has officially recorded 723,559 total COVID-19 cases, a total that double-counts people who have gotten the disease multiple times.

Nearly half those infections have come in the past four months, when Connecticut endured its



People wait in line for a COVID-19 test at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks on Dec. 29. JESSICA HILL/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

largest pandemic wave yet due to the highly transmissible omicron variant.

Experts say prior immunity

from COVID-19 infection, such as vaccination, can help protect people from future infection, thereby lessening the immedi-

ate risk of a large-scale surge in a community that has recently seen a wave of cases. The problem, they say, is that natural immunity

wanes over time, leaving people vulnerable to reinfection after about six months.

Additionally, research suggests infection from one variant does not always provide full immunity against future variants. According to the Washington Post, a seroprevalence study just before the omicron wave that included vaccination as well as natural immunity found COVID-19 antibodies in 90% of adults — which ultimately didn't stop a surge of infections, hospitalizations and deaths.

Of all U.S. states, Wisconsin had the largest share of residents who'd had COVID-19 as of the end of January, at 56%, according to the CDC's seroprevalence study. Another 13 states also had more than half of their respective populations infected, led by Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Wyoming and Texas.

Vermont was the state with the smallest share of people infected, at 18%, followed by Hawaii, Maine, Oregon, Washington, New Hampshire, Virginia and Massachusetts. Data was not available for Nevada, North Dakota, Arizona and Utah.

Alex Puttermann can be reached at aputtermann@courant.com.

Best

from Page 1

not prepared a resume in 20 years. I thought, oh, no I'm not ready. But I threw my hat into the ring."

She said moving from a faith-based position to a non-faith-based position was not a concern. "Whether the organization is faith-based or not, I am a person of faith. It doesn't matter. Those are my values and approach anyway, even if I don't have to stand in a pulpit to do it," she said.

Best's website, revdrshelley.com, lists

some of her other accomplishments: "Developed a \$1 million training model funded by the state of Connecticut and the federal government.

As a political appointee served as an expert in program development and cultural competence in the Connecticut Department of Children and Families and also served as Connecticut's leader in faith-based initiatives during the administrations of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Presented a white paper on my soulpreneur ministry model at The White House."

"Throughout the search process, we

were impressed with Shelley's authentic leadership style, deep knowledge of the arts community, commitment to creating positive impact, and the depth of her experience," said board President Brian Recifi.

Best said she will open her tenure with a "listening tour" of the Hartford region. "I will be hearing what the community wants regarding our commitment to the arts. What do we have? What are our strengths? What are the opportunities that we have?" she said.

Best was one of 70 applicants. The search committee included Paul Guzzardi, audit director at Deloitte; Christopher

Delelo, chief human resources officer at UConn; Amanda Roy, director of community impact at the Council; Patricia Shirley; Jane Woods Weber, executive director at Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund; and T'Challa Williams, one of the founders of Hartford's LIT literary festival.

The 50-year-old Arts Council provides financial and organizational support for arts organizations in 34 Capitol region municipalities.

Susan Dunne can be reached at sdunne@courant.com.

Lawsuit

from Page 1

the town does not comment on that," Interim Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said in an email Tuesday.

Blank is currently on special assignment as the department's accreditation manager. She was assigned to regular patrol duty during much of the time when she alleges harassment.

The lawsuit claims that a year after Blank joined the department, some co-workers began gossiping about how she had been the victim of domestic violence by an ex-boyfriend. One male officer was "casually talking and joking about her situation and making untrue and inappropriate comments about

her while at a training class."

The suit said a male supervisor took her complaint, but took no action against the officer. Instead, the supervisor added a regulation prohibiting department members from spreading malicious rumors about each other.

She said the same male officer later put up a social media post portraying her as "unprofessional and potentially having a drinking problem that prevented her from effectively doing her job. This was untrue, offensive, and salacious."

Supervisors gave the male officer a written reprimand, but Blank contends that was inadequate.

Her suit also contends that she suspected a male janitor had gone through her closed gym bag in the department's locker room and left her underwear out.

"Rather than investigate the incident immediately, Lieutenant (Michael) Connolly told her that she should not have left her gym bag unsecured in the locker room," according to the suit.

When commanders decided to investigate, they put a small hidden camera in the female locker room. Female officers were supposed to be told when the camera was activated and when it was off, but that didn't consistently happen, Blank claimed.

"The janitor continued to work day after day and it did not appear as though anyone was actively trying to stop this behavior or protect the female employees," according to the suit. "Repeated requests for someone to simply check the hallway camera monitoring the door to the female locker room were ignored until the footage had recorded over

itself and was unavailable."

The suit said the janitor later confessed to stealing another officer's sunglasses.

"It was further discovered that he had stolen other items from the police department. After this occurred, the plaintiff requested a formal review as to why there appeared to be no official internal investigation regarding her complaint," the suit claims. "To this day, she has not received a satisfactory answer."

Blank is seeking damages for emotional distress along with other compensation. The town is scheduled to file a response in court before March 7.

An agenda for a Feb. 22 special meeting of the Town Council included discussion in executive session of pending litigation involving suits from Blank, Cetran and Jenny Rivera.

Poor

from Page 1

speaks to ... why we need tax reform in this state," said Rep. Sean Scanlon, D-Guilford, who is co-chairman of the Finance Committee and spearheading a push for a new \$600-per-child credit within the state income tax.

In Connecticut, the analysis has been a source of tension that's generally been swept under the rug.

After the first analysis, released in 2014 using 2011 data, showed great disparities between burdens placed on the wealthy, middle class and poor, lawmakers and governors postponed a second one four times.

Gov. Ned Lamont, a fiscally moderate-to-conservative Democrat who approved the last delay in 2019, said he believes income and wealth disparities should be addressed through federal taxation and not at the state level.

A Greenwich businessman, the governor has also said he believes that raising state taxes on the wealthy to finance tax relief for low- and middle-income families would prompt the rich to flee Connecticut.

But advocates for tax reform counter that an ever-increasing share of the state's population is living paycheck-to-paycheck.

The analysis found that nearly two-thirds of the state's population accounts for just 20% of all income earned in Connecticut, yet they effectively lose nearly 20% to 26% of what they make to state and municipal taxes.

At the other end of the spectrum, households making more than \$1.6 million per year account for less than one-half of 1% of the population and represent another 20% of all income earned in the state three years ago. Yet they paid effective state and local tax rates between 6.6% and 7%.

Things haven't changed much for the rich since the last study, when the wealthiest groups paid between 6.3% and 6.5%.

For the poorest households, the pressure has intensified. Effective taxes ranged from 14% to 24% in 2011.

The middle class also has lost ground.

Households in the middle of the income pack paid between 10.5% and 13.4% a decade ago, but now face effective rates of 11.5% to 15.5%.

But Department of Revenue Services Commissioner Mark Boughton cautions against comparing the two analyses.

When the first report was prepared, state officials looked at the impacts of four taxes that weren't included the second time around. And three of those four — levies on utilities, insurance and real estate transactions — routinely involve expenses that businesses shift onto households. The fourth was the Connecticut estate tax.

Boughton said he believes the legislation defining how fairness studies are to be conducted don't mandate the inclusion of those other taxes.

Why, then, did the department include them in the first tax incidence analysis, prepared in 2014?

"I wasn't commissioner then," said Boughton, whom Lamont appointed in December 2020. "My job is to follow state law."

The Finance Committee raised a bill last week to develop a uniform methodology for all future tax fairness studies, and Scanlon added it's essential, given that the next analysis will have to assess the significant impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on household finances in 2020 and 2021.

"I want to make sure, in future years, that policy makers will be working off the same set of information so we can see if the [tax] incidence is getting worse or better," Scanlon

added. "That's common sense."

Boughton noted that since 2011 the state has added some higher sales tax rates on luxury items, such as expensive cars and jewelry, making that tax somewhat more sensitive to disparities in household income. But Lamont and the 2019 legislature also imposed a 1% sales tax surcharge on all restaurant meals and other prepared foods, a burden that critics say falls most heavily on poor and middle-income households.

Connecticut Voices for Children, a New Haven-based policy group pushing for progressive tax reform, expressed disappointment that more tax data wasn't included in the report.

"While we appreciate the release of this statutorily required report, it's kind of like driving a car with not enough air in the tires ... it gets us there, but not very well," said Connecticut Voices' executive director, Emily Byrne.

But even though Boughton's agency opted not to analyze certain taxes that typically place burdens on Connecticut households, Byrne said the report still shows a clear trend, "which is that the state's regressive tax system hurts working- and middle-class families the most, and things have gotten worse."

to \$24 an hour.

"Stop & Shop has a real willingness to invest in higher wages," Flickinger said.

With compensation that includes a pension, a rare benefit in the private sector, Stop & Shop had higher productivity and better retention among its workers during the pandemic, Flickinger said.

Supermarkets that profited during the pandemic at the expense of restaurants ordered shut by public health officials will likely continue to benefit even with restaurants re-opened as consumers, struggling to pay more for energy and other expenses, cut costs, he said.

"The best place to save for food is at a supermarket and wholesale shopping," Flickinger said.

Stephen Singer can be reached at ssinger@courant.com.

Contract

from Page 1

Supermarkets were among the few businesses not shut during the pandemic. Workers, who were particularly exposed to COVID-19, were often required to enforce state and local mask rules and other regulations, occasionally drawing abuse from customers. Stop & Shop and the UFCW negotiated premium pay for workers.

In the new contract, the union said employees will not be required to contribute more to their health insurance, which was a key disagreement that led to a strike in 2019. A health insurance fund was merged with several union locals, saving money, Hoehne said.

In addition, increased hours will be available to senior part-time employees who want

guaranteed hours. The contract also calls for a \$500 bonus for full-time employees and \$250 for part-time workers, according to the UFCW.

The contract will boost pay nearly 29%, to \$19 an hour from \$15.30, for "click and collect" workers who fill online orders brought to customers for curbside pick up, Hoehne said. The jobs were established in response to the pandemic.

In a statement, Stop & Shop said the agreement is fair and will allow the supermarket chain to "recognize and reward" employees' contributions and commitment to customers and the community and provide workers with "opportunities for growth and advancement."

The contract also makes it possible for Stop & Shop to "continue to compete and thrive in this competitive landscape as the last large unionized grocer in New England."

The agreement contrasts with a collapse in

contract talks in 2019 over health care costs and other provisions. The result was an 11-day strike costing workers their paychecks and the Netherlands parent company, Ahold Delhaize, \$345 million in lost sales.

"I don't think anyone wanted to go though that again," Hoehne said.

Retail analyst Burt P. Flickinger III, managing director at Strategic Resource Group, said that following the "devastating strike" three years ago, the two sides this year made a "wise strategic decision."

"No enemies at the bargaining table this time," he said.

Ahold Delhaize posted 2021 sales of the equivalent of \$83.9 billion, up 5% from 2020. Sales in U.S. stores for the year were the equivalent of \$50.5 billion, an increase of 5.6%.

Retailers are boosting wages to attract workers in a tight labor market, with Target announcing Monday it will pay workers up

State, federal officials warn of romance scams

'Tinder Swindler' documentary cited by Tong in news release

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

Scammers who prey on the lonely and lovelorn have drained life savings from victims in Connecticut and throughout the nation, state and federal officials warned.

Romance scams have cost victims in the U.S. \$1.3 billion in the last five years, and the crooks' profits have been rising. Recent convictions in a federal trial in Bridgeport reveal the yield in cash, cryptocurrency and gifts available to heartless grifters, authorities say.

State Attorney General William Tong in a news release referenced the federal case and a Netflix documentary, "The Tinder Swindler," which tells the story of a man who allegedly fleeced women out of millions using the Tinder dating app. While the scope and scale of the depicted scam was exceptional, dating app cons are common, state and federal law enforcement officials say.

Scammers strike up relationships, earn their victims' trust and persuade them to send money. The romance ripoff artists also use social media apps such as Instagram and Facebook.

"Be hypervigilant when a stranger contacts you online and asks you to share personal information and send money," Tong said. "It's most

likely a scam."

He cited complaints sent to his office in the last two years. One Connecticut woman said she lost \$100,000 to a scammer she met on the dating app Bumble. She and the scammer communicated for several months before he claimed to be stranded in Turkey and in debt. The woman sent him \$100,000 in wire transfers and BitCoin before realizing it was a scam, Tong said.

"I've never thought of myself as a gullible person, but I was manipulated," the woman was quoted as saying in the news release.

Earlier this year, a man told Tong's office he was asked to send \$6,300 to a woman he connected with on a dating app. The woman said she was traveling in Dubai and needed the money for an emergency. The man recognized the scam and did not pay, the release said.

Typically, romance scammers create profiles on dating websites that include false personal details such as the death of a spouse or military service to gain victims' trust. Then they ask for money for medical or business emergencies, travel expenses to see the victim and other fictional purposes.

Dating scams are among the costliest cons. In 2021, victims lost \$547 million, up 80% since 2020, the FTC reported. The median individual reported loss in 2021 was \$2,400.

Reports about romance scams increased for every age group in 2021, according to the agency. For people ages 18-29, the number of

reports increased more than tenfold from 2017 to 2021. But the reported median loss increased with age: people 70 and older reported the highest individual median losses at \$9,000, compared to \$750 for the 18 to 29 age group, the FTC reported.

In mid-February, a federal jury in Bridgeport found three men guilty of bilking millions of dollars from mostly elderly victims through romance and lottery scams. Farouq Fasasi, 27, Rodney Thomas Jr., 31, and Ralph Pierre, 32, were convicted of conspiracy, fraud and money laundering offenses, federal authorities said.

From August 2015 to March 2020, the men persuaded victims around the nation to send money, gifts and personal details. Victims mailed cash, money orders and checks to various addresses in Connecticut. They also wired or deposited money into bank accounts in the state controlled by the swindlers, authorities said.

Fasasi, Thomas, Pierre and other co-conspirators lived together on Sherman Avenue in New Haven, where many packages containing cash, checks and money orders were delivered. To help launder the money, Pierre formed a fake charity called "Global Protection Foundation" and opened four bank accounts in the fake charity's name, authorities said.

The scams defrauded more than 200 victims across the U.S. of more than \$5 million, officials said. Many of the victims were elderly and vulnerable, and some victims lost

their life savings. One Connecticut victim lost more than \$1 million.

A jury found Fasasi and Thomas guilty of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering and mail fraud. Fasasi also was found guilty of three counts of money laundering. Pierre was found guilty of conspiracy to commit money laundering and money laundering. Sentencing is set for May 10.

"These verdicts will help to heal the many individuals who gave thousands of dollars to these predators," U.S. Attorney Leonard Boyle said. "I encourage all to resist falling victim to these schemes and not send any money to anyone you haven't met in person. Instead, call your local police department, or 833-FRAUD-11, for assistance and to report these crimes."

Some tips to avoid becoming the victim of a romance scam:

■ Never send money or gifts to a love interest you haven't met in person. Scammers will contact you on dating apps and request money, sometimes in the form of cryptocurrency or gift cards.

■ Be wary of someone you've never met professing their love quickly. Tinder calls this "lovebombing" on its tips to avoid romance scams — bit.ly/3M7dUwF.

■ Scammers will often claim to be overseas or in the military and have emergencies in which they need cash immediately.

■ Scammers may study information people share online and then

pretend to have common interests, according to the FTC. Details they share about themselves will always include built-in excuses for not meeting in person. For example, many reportedly claim to be serving overseas in the military or working on an offshore oil rig.

■ If you suspect you might be scammed, stop communicating with the person immediately. Seek advice from someone you trust, like a friend or family member.

■ If you've been contacted by someone you don't know online, take time to verify the person's identity and think through what you're being asked. Does it make sense? Search to see if other people have reported similar stories as scams.

■ Reverse image search (bit.ly/3MaGInT) the person's dating profile picture to see if it belongs to a different person or account. If you find the picture and it's associated with another person or the details don't add up, it's likely a scam.

Victims are urged to contact local police and the Federal Bureau of Investigations Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov. Complainants also may call Tong's office at 860-808-5420, or file a complaint with the office at dir.ct.gov/ag/complaint. Scams also may be reported to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357), or at ftc.gov/complaint.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at jleavenworth@courant.com

'Cyrano' movie started on a Connecticut stage

By Christopher Arnott
Hartford Courant

Peter Dinklage's performance in "Cyrano," with acrobatic swordfights, lyrical song-and-dance scenes and grand romantic moments on a Connecticut stage became the stuff of legend, since relatively few people got to see it.

The much-lauded new movie originated as a stage show that had its first workshop production at Goodspeed Musicals' Norma Terris Theatre in Chester in 2018.

Many musicals become Broadway hits, tour the country and are embraced by regional theaters before Hollywood comes calling. By contrast, "Cyrano" has had just two stage productions: its world premiere, as a work in progress, at the Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre in August 2018, followed over a year later by a full production off Broadway at the Daryl Roth Theatre in November 2019.

The Goodspeed commissioned the show, which its creator Erica Schmidt had conceived some years earlier. It was her fresh take on the classic story of an intrepid adventurer and poet whose insecurity about his own attractiveness leads him to ghostwrite love letters to the woman of his dreams, Roxane, for a handsome young colleague of his named Christian rather than wooing her himself.

The story was made famous in an 1897 play by Edmond Rostand with the title "Cyrano de Bergerac,"



Haley Bennett and Peter Dinklage appear in "Cyrano," onstage in Chester in 2018. DIANE SOBOLEWSKI

which was very loosely based on a real-life 17th century writer and soldier with that name.

In her version, Schmidt wanted to concentrate on the inner turmoil of Cyrano that leads to his heart-wrenching romantic misrepresentation. One of the Goodspeed cast members, Damon J. Gillespie (who played Cyrano's pal LeBret in the show and does not appear in the movie), told the Courant in 2018 that "we all have our own insecurities and demons that keep us from falling in love or whatever. It's more about Cyrano's pride than anything."

To set the downbeat, more internalized tone of the piece Schmidt asked members of the moody pop band The National to write the score. They provided some previously written songs in the spirit

of Schmidt's script, later revising them or writing whole new songs. At the Goodspeed, the songs were performed live by the cast and a six-piece band with longtime The National collaborator Olivier Manchon as the music director. The songs have a very different sound in the film.

The stage show also had a different feel than the movie does. The Goodspeed costumes, for instance, were historical but not specific to any classical era, while the movie is more clearly rooted in the 1600s.

Costume Design is the only category in which "Cyrano" was nominated for an Academy Award. Before the nominations were announced, some critics had suggested Dinklage was a likely pick for Best Actor, but it didn't happen.

The Goodspeed production was directed by Schmidt. She is married to Dinklage, the star of both the stage and screen versions, though she had not initially developed the piece with him in mind.

The film is directed by Joe Wright, who came to the Norma Terris to see his romantic partner, Haley Bennett, in the role of Roxane and realized the cinematic possibilities of the project. Wright also adapted "Pride & Prejudice," "Anna Karenina" and "Pan."

Of the Goodspeed cast, only Dinklage and Bennett are also in the film. Both are best known for TV or film rather than stage pursuits. Dinklage is perhaps best known for "Game of Thrones" and "The Station Agent," while Bennett has appeared in such films as "Girl on the Train," "The Magnificent Seven," "Hillbilly Elegy" and "Swallow."

Cyrano was scheduled to run for a month at the Goodspeed, from Aug. 3-Sept. 2 2018, but when tickets sold out in a matter of days, setting a sales record at the Goodspeed, the run was extended a week. But those extra performances all had to be canceled when the actor playing Christian, Blake Jenner, left the production early due to another opportunity.

The Norma Terris has around 200 seats, so fewer than 7,000 people were able to see the show.

Christopher Arnott can be reached at carnott@courant.com.

Connecticut will divest assets owned by Russia

Official says action results from attack on Ukraine

By Christine Dempsey and Stephen Singer
Hartford Courant

Connecticut is divesting Russian-owned assets from its retirement plans and trust funds following Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine, state Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden said Tuesday.

State investment in companies in Russia and government debt issued by Russia amounts to \$218 million, less than half of 1% of the state's retirement funds valued at more than \$47 billion. Wooden's decision to drop the investments are as much a business decision in response to the collapsing value of Russian investments due to sanctions squeezing its economy as a protest against Russia's attack on a democratically elected government.

"The Ukrainian people are experiencing an assault on their freedom and suffering devastating human loss due to an unprovoked and unjustified attack by the Russian government," Wooden said. "We cannot stand idly by as the humanitarian crisis unfolds and Russian markets crumble, and I cannot continue to invest these pension funds in a way that runs counter to the foreign policy and national interests of the United States."

The attack that Russian President Vladimir Putin launched last Thursday has created a fiscal and humanitarian crisis that puts global markets at risk, Wooden said. His decision to divest Russian stocks and bonds is a "necessary step towards protecting the long-term viability of our investments globally."

The value of Connecticut Retirement Plans and Trust Fund's Russian-related investments has declined since 2014 due to rising geopolitical risks, he said. Sanctions imposed over the past several years against Russia and Russian cyberattacks and election interference "have made the Russian markets less favorable relative to others," Wooden said.

"Eliminating our holdings of Russian assets is not only a moral imperative but the current crisis also constitutes a substantial risk for Connecticut's investments, our national policy and economic security," Wooden said.

Connecticut joins California, Georgia, Oregon, Pennsylvania and other states that are moving to divest state assets from Russian interests.

Wooden said in a statement that Putin "needs to know that the free world stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and that Putin's abhorrent actions will have enduring, harrowing economic consequences in the days, months, and years ahead."

The treasurer's office did not release a specific list of the investments he targeted.

Christine Dempsey may be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

SCSU student remembered as 'warm and kind'

Spates among six women killed in head-on crashes

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

As police continue to investigate two head-on crashes that killed six within 20 minutes Saturday, information is beginning to emerge about the victims. One was on a ladies night out with friends; another was a student at Southern Connecticut State University.

Four of the women, including Yarelis Ramos, died in a crash with a tractor trailer in the Hartford tunnel on I-84 about 2:45 a.m. About 20 minutes earlier, two women, including a 21-year-old Southern student named Chardé Monet Spates, died in a head-on crash on I-91 in Meriden.

Investigations into the collisions, which took place more than 20 miles apart, are continuing.

Ladies night out

Yarelis Ramos, 37, told her boyfriend he couldn't come out with her Friday night because it was a girls' night out, said her mother, Ivette Negron. She was with her friend and neighbor, Quashonda Grant, 31, who lived in the same apartment building in Hartford's South End.

The women were with two others, April Slade, 40, and Natasha Izekia Rivera-Hall, 40, who was driving, at the time of the crash. Somehow, the SUV they were in



Spates Ramos

Camry Chardé Spates was driving south in the north lanes collided head-on with a 2012 BMW driven by Judith Melvin-Levy of Windsor, state police said. Both Spates and Melvin-Levy died; Melvin-Levy's front seat passenger Justin Thomas Levy, 21, survived, suffering injuries troopers said seemed minor.

A tractor trailer also struck the BMW but was not involved in the initial crash, state police said.

As with the other crash, police said they are still trying to determine why the car was in the wrong lanes.

Chardé Spates of New Haven was only a few credits shy of earning her degree in public health, a Southern spokesman, Patrick Dilger, said Tuesday. She was scheduled to finish classes this semester, complete an internship in the summer and graduate in August.

Spates was part of the university's Residential New Haven Promise Emerging Leaders Program in 2018.

Her mentor, Dawn Stanton, director of University Access Programs, said Spates was "so warm and kind and full of ambition. She was a hard worker who learned to balance multiple responsibilities and took great pride in everything she committed to achieving."

She was "beautiful inside and out with a smile that lit up the office every time she walked in," Stanton added. "I will miss her smile, her occasional texts, and knowing all the ways she would have changed the world. The loss of Chardé is heartbreaking."

Faculty members said Spates worked several jobs but managed to get good grades.

Why do head-on crashes happen?

State police say head-on crashes happen for different reasons and are avoidable.

Anyone who is drunk or under the influence of a drug should not drive. A designated driver should get behind the wheel and if there is none, a ride-share service should be called, Sgt. Dawn Pagan said.

People with medical conditions that may cause them to be sick or disoriented also shouldn't drive. Pagan said some drivers suffer diabetic attacks while driving, and elderly people sometimes become disoriented. She asked that people should keep an eye on their ailing or aging family members.

"Manage your loved ones," she said. "Pay attention to their driving."

Highway drivers may take steps to avoid being struck by a wrong-way driver by driving in the center or right lane, Pagan said Tuesday. That's because wrong-way drivers often travel in the left lane.

"When wrong way drivers are traveling the wrong way on the limited access highway they often travel in the left lane because they believe they are driving on the correct side of the road," she said.

Christine Dempsey can be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

**PUBLIC NOTICES****NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

ESTATE OF REBECCA M. FAUL, Late of East Haddam, AKA REBECCA W. FAUL, AKA REBECCA FAUL (22-00020)

The Hon. Jennifer L. Berknerstock, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Region # 14 Probate Court, by decree dated February 25, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Suzanne B. Emond, Clerk

The fiduciary is:
DAPHNE JEANNE MESSICK, CLOUTIER & CASSELLA, LLC, 29 ELM STREET, OLD SAYBROOK, CT 06475
3/2/22 7160138

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF Virginia M. Willets, Late of Ivortyton (22-0043)

The Hon. Jeffrey A. McNamara, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Saybrook Probate Court, by decree dated February 22, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Marge B. Caltharp, Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Diana E. Johnson
c/o JEANNINE LEWIS, LAW OFFICE OF JEANNINE LEWIS, PO. BOX 324, ESSEX, CT 06426
3/2/22 7158947

TOWN OF ESSEX**PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

MARCH 9, 2022

MEETING ROOM A

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86858598915?pwd=RlDVkpTwJhQStseGVQQW5ZZUk1UT09>

Meeting ID: 868 5859 8915, Passcode: 297261
Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Informational Meeting will be held in and for the Town of Essex, Connecticut, Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 4:45 pm in the Essex Town Hall, 29 West Avenue in said Essex.

The Town of Essex will conduct a Public Informational Meeting concerning the proposed River Road Sidewalk Project from North Main Street to Heritage Cove Road on Wednesday, March 9 at 4:45 pm.

Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman
Bruce M. Glowac, Selectman
Dated this 16th day of February, 2022 at Essex, CT
3/2/2022 7156962

Invitation to Bid 2C22-070**WOODLAND STREET SIDEWALK****REPLACEMENT**

The City of Bristol is seeking bids removal of biminiuous sidewalks and replacement with concrete sidewalks on Woodland Street. Bid documents may be obtained at no charge by downloading from the web site via the following link: <https://www.bristolct.gov/Bids.aspx?BidID=1105>

Bids will be accepted until March 22, 2022 at 3:00 pm via the online electronic bidding system through QuestCDN.com.

Bids received after the opening date and time will not be considered for award. The City reserves the right to waive any informations in the bid, to reject any or all bids, and to accept the bid that in its judgment is in its best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by a Bid Security in the amount of 10% of the bidders base bid amount, in the form of a Bid Bond made payable to the City of Bristol.

The awarded contractor will be required to secure a Performance Bond and a Labor and Materials Bond, each in the amount of 100% of the contract award, provided by a surety licensed to do business in the State of Connecticut. The requirements for prevailing wage rates as outlined within G.G.S. 31-53 are to apply to the resultant contract award.

The successful Bidder shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. The City of Bristol will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

Roger D. Rousseau, Purchasing Agent
Tel (860) 584-6195
Fax (860) 584-6174
<http://www.bristolct.gov/bids>
3/2/2022 7158945

Extra Space Storage will hold a public auction to sell personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:

177 Brickyard Rd, Farmington, CT 06032
Auction date: March 9, 2022 at 1 PM
Sherry Reyes Unit V19 clothes and beds, home goods.
The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storagetreasures.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.
Please run this on February 23rd and March 2nd, in zone 1. Please use a continuous wrap format to reduce size and send affidavit for each ad to address below. Also, please send proof of ad via email to ensure accuracy.
2/23, 3/2/2022 7140570

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown will be held in the Common Council Chamber of the Municipal Building and remotely, via WebEx, at Join A Meeting, Event # 2338 291 5107 on MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2022, AT 7:00 PM to consider and act upon the following:

A. Board of Education: \$173,630 - Acct. No. 2080-33000-55463-xx-2022; matching funds for Farm Hill Elementary School PV panels from General Fund Acct. No. 1000-00000-30310.

B. Board of Education: \$69,338 - Acct. No. 2080-33000-55464-xx-2022; matching funds for Snow Elementary School PV panels from General Fund Acct. No. 1000-00000-30310.

Any and all persons interested may appear and be heard.

ATTEST:

HON. BENJAMIN D. FLORSHEIM,
MAYOR

Dated at Middletown, Connecticut, 2nd day of March, 2022
3/2/2022 7158120

TOWN OF ESSEX**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

MARCH 9, 2022

MEETING ROOM A

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86858598915?pwd=RlDVkpTwJhQStseGVQQW5ZZUk1UT09>

Meeting ID: 868 5859 8915, Passcode: 297261
Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Special Town Meeting will be held in and for the Town of Essex, Connecticut, Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 4:45 pm in the Essex Town Hall, 29 West Avenue in said Essex.

TO ACT AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. To consent and approve of the appointment by the First Selectman of one (1) member to the Economic Development Commission.

2. To consent and approve of the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of one (1) regular member to the Park and Recreation Commission.

3. To consent and approve the irrevocable acceptance of the ARPA funds in the amount of \$1,973,399 as revenue loss utilizing the standard allowance provision as permitted by the US Treasury under the Final Rule. Such funds would be used to pay for general government services during the period of performance which must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026. Government Services expenditure utilizing ARPA funds will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and, as needed, voted on at a Town Meeting duly held for that purpose.

Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman
Bruce M. Glowac, Selectman
Dated this 16th day of February, 2022 at Essex, CT
3/2/2022 7156987

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LIVING

WWW.COURANT.COM/FEATURES



JOSE BERRIO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES

By Laura Pitcher
The New York Times

Just over a month before Jocelyn Woods and Mia Garcia met, they sat down independently and listed the qualities that each was seeking in a partner. "From how they cooked to the interactions they would have with their family, I was extremely specific," said Woods, a 23-year-old director who lives in Los Angeles. Later, the pair would meet at a friend's birthday party, feel "immediately like best friends" (according to Garcia, a 21-year-old musician who also lives in Los Angeles) and then, four weeks into dating, show each other these pages.

Had they somehow manifested their relationship? Manifestation is a form of intention setting that involves focusing one's thoughts on a desired outcome until it happens.

It's a line of psychological thought that was popularized by books including the 2006 bestseller "The Secret," by Rhonda Byrne, but has been practiced in various forms throughout history.

In recent years, manifestation has been creeping into social media feeds along with other practices associated with new-age spirituality. Love manifestation rituals garner millions of views on YouTube, and the hashtag "manifestation" has more than 14 billion views on TikTok.

These videos, which cover desires such as

Can you manifest a partner?

Some think that focusing on a desired outcome can make it happen, but studies suggest otherwise

bringing your ex-partner back into your life and being seen as "more attractive," seem to address every hyper-specific (and sometimes misguided or slightly vain) human impulse. Last year, in a TikTok video, a certified life coach named Amanda Clayton claimed that one could manifest a partner's obsessive interest by repeating a phrase starting with: "No matter what he is doing, no matter who he is with, he is always thinking about me." The audio has been used in more than 190,000 videos.

Some studies have found that manifestation rituals can have the opposite effect. "In our findings, the more positively people fantasized about getting together with a crush, the less likely that they actually enter a romantic relationship with this person a month later," said Gabriele Oettingen, a professor of psychology at New York University and the author

of "Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation." This, Oettingen said, can be combated by complementing positive fantasies with a "healthy dose of reality."

There are many ways to manifest, including by writing down specific desires as Woods and Garcia did. But Porsche Little, a spiritual worker who lives in Los Angeles, warns people against trying to manifest an individual person. Instead, she said, it is better to consider the general qualities desired in a person.

"My thing is, you can't tell the universe you want a loving, rich, 6-foot-5 man by July if you're still checking your ex's likes," Little said. "You can make space for life by ridding yourself of old behavioral patterns, negative mindsets and bad relationships, and when you start to declutter the path, it sets the intentions

that you're ready for the opposite of everything I just listed. That alone is a manifestation."

While manifestation is based on the belief that the words you use and the thoughts you visualize hold power, Little said true results are based on intentions and actions. "What the universe has written for us goes beyond our humanistic desires, and I tell my clients to ask themselves questions like 'If I were to get this love, what would I do with it?'" she said.

Gabby Bernstein, an author with a forthcoming book called "Happy Days: The Guided Path from Trauma to Profound Freedom and Inner Peace," believes anyone can partake in manifestation, but one first has to believe that they are worthy of manifesting what they want.

With that in mind, manifesting love is as much

about working on your inner love for yourself as it is about finding another person. Bernstein said attempting to control the outcome of your dating life is one way you can block your manifestations. "I would just set the intention to attract within the highest good for all, rather than becoming set on it being a certain way, or a certain person at a certain time," she said.

Bernstein believes that she manifested her husband by writing a list of the nonnegotiable qualities she sought in a partner. This clarity, she said, was an important part of her process. "The first step to manifesting love is getting yourself into the feeling of romantic energy, even without being in a relationship yet," Bernstein said. "That means doing things that inspire you and being with friends that make you feel good about yourself.

If you like cooking, take a cooking class and do the things alone that you'd also want to do with a partner."

Monica Johnson, a psychologist and the founder of Kind Mind Psychology, said using the word "manifestation" to describe this shift in thinking might give it a more magical quality, but it can also be described as practicing cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness.

"Labeling these strategies as manifestation is problematic because it removes the safety and security of the science that supports these techniques," she said. "Science also understands its limitations and makes those things known."

This, Johnson said, includes grieving a relationship that has ended rather than attempting to manifest it into existence again. "Why would you even want someone who didn't enthusiastically consent to the relationship?" she said.

Despite what manifestation TikTok might have you believe, the way to manifest love is also the healthiest way to date generally — being honest about what you want while also being open to love arriving in unexpected forms and on no set timeline.

Little summarized the premise of manifestation in dating: that love is possible and we all deserve it.

"We can all be realistic in love without thinking too small," she said.

"We are told that trying to fit a square into a circle is impossible, but what if the circle is big enough?"

"As I become more experienced with manifesting, it's important for me to realize that when it comes to love, I can only manifest a lover that mirrors how I feel about myself." — Porsche Little, a spiritual worker who lives in Los Angeles

EX-ETIQUETTE

Putting kids first is the unselfish thing to do

By Jann Blackstone
Tribune News Service

Q: Although I have been married to one man for 30 years, I read your column every week. You seem to always bring it back to "Put the children first." My thought is maybe if parents put their relationship first instead of everything focused on the kids, there would be fewer divorces! What do you think of that?

A: I think there may be a misconception here. This column is about dealing

with exes, and the aftermath of breaking up and starting over. "Put the children first" is advice based on second or subsequent relationships — when you enter a relationship with a previous responsibility to your children already in place. If you have been married to the same man for 30 years, and you have children with that man, then the family dynamic is completely different.

However, there is some truth to your statement. Children must see the

strength in a primary relationship to have a model they can follow in their own life. Whether it is their first family or a bonus family, what a child sees, they will copy — or pick a partner that produces familiar feelings generated from dealing with their upbringing.

That said, of course your reasoning is understandable, but you should also know the divorce rate has decreased over the years, not necessarily because fewer people are divorcing,

but because fewer people choose to marry.

Ideally, wouldn't it be nice if all relationships were happy and no one broke up? But that's not reality. And since we are faced with breakups, "Putting the children first" seems to be the unselfish thing to do. Rarely do children want their parents to break up, even when dysfunction is painfully evident. Parents working together in the name of their children regardless of marital status is the key.



DREAMSTIME

CELEBRITIES

'DWTS' pro in Poland after fleeing

From news services

"Dancing with the Stars" professional dancer Maksim Chmerkovskiy made it into Poland on Tuesday after fleeing his native Ukraine amid Russia's invasion.

In an update on Instagram, Chmerkovskiy wrote that he'd gone 31 hours without sleeping, and was still an hour and a half away from the destination after leaving Ukraine on Monday aboard a train.

"I absolutely have to say this: POLISH PEOPLE ARE AMAZING!!!!!!!" Chmerkovskiy wrote in a post to his Instagram story. "THANK YOU FROM THE ABSOLUTE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND SOUL."

Chmerkovskiy has chronicled his experiences on Instagram since the invasion began last week. On Monday, he described a "traumatizing" scene at a train station as many tried to flee, and called the train "sweaty and claustrophobic." Before he left Ukraine, Chmerkovskiy shared a video from Kyiv on Monday, saying the "streets are crazy" and that there was "a lot of fighting everywhere."

"I got arrested like a foot outside of here, but again, all good. Promise," the dancer said, adding the arrest was "probably the least traumatizing moment in this whole thing, as far as Ukraine is concerned, but for me, it was just a reality check."

Chmerkovskiy, who moved to New York as a teen, appeared on 17 seasons of "Dancing with the Stars." His brother, Val Chmerkovskiy, and wife, Peta Murgatroyd, are also veterans of the ABC series.

Rivera family settles wrongful death suit: The family of the late "Glee" star Naya Rivera has settled a wrongful death lawsuit over the actor's



Dancer Maksim Chmerkovskiy has fled his native Ukraine amid Russia's invasion. **MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY 2020**

drowning in a Southern California lake nearly two years ago. Amjad M. Khan, an attorney representing Rivera's estate and her son, Josey Hollis Dorsey, confirmed Tuesday that "all parties have entered into a global settlement, which is subject to approval by the Ventura Superior Court on March 16."

The singer was reported missing on July 8, 2020, after she took her then-4-year-old son on a boat ride at Lake Piru in Ventura County, California. Her body was discovered five days later. An autopsy ruled the cause of death as an accidental drowning.

In November 2020, Rivera's ex-husband, Ryan Dorsey, filed a lawsuit against Ventura County on behalf of their son claiming that her death was preventable. The lawsuit stated that the rented boat lacked proper safety equipment in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard safety standards.

The Chicks to tour: The Chicks are heading back on tour, the group's first major outing since 2017 and first shows since releasing its fifth studio album "Gaslighter." The Grammy-winning trio — made up

of Martie Maguire, Emily Strayer and Natalie Maines — announced Monday that The Chicks Tour will hit 27 North American cities starting in June. The Chicks released "Gaslighter" in 2020, its first studio album in 14 years, but the pandemic derailed plans for a tour.

'Bachelor' Underwood engaged: Less than a year after coming out as gay, Colton Underwood, the former star of ABC's dating show "The Bachelor," is engaged to political strategist Jordan C. Brown. The news came courtesy of People magazine, but was backed up on social media with messages from both men. "life is going to be fun with you," Underwood, 30, wrote Monday on Instagram, posting a photo of himself and his fiance walking in the woods.

March 2 birthdays: Author John Irving is 80. Actor Laraine Newman is 70. Singer Jay Osmond is 67. Singer Jon Bon Jovi is 60. Actor Daniel Craig is 54. Singer Chris Martin is 45. Actor Rebel Wilson is 42. Actor Bryce Dallas Howard is 41. Actor Nathalie Emmanuel is 33. Singer Luke Combs is 32. Singer Becky G is 25.

'Killing Eve's' final season 'much more personal,' producer warns

By Lynn Elber

Associated Press

"Killing Eve" stars Sandra Oh and Jodie Comer say the spy thriller's fourth and final season quickly makes clear that their characters have changed.

But Eve, Villanelle and viewers should prepare for "how much more personal it is" as the hit series unspools in its eight-episode conclusion, said executive producer Sally Woodward Gentle.

"This is going to be a bigger journey than they've been on in any other season, and more emotionally charged," Woodward Gentle, who has guided "Killing Eve" throughout its successful run, said in an interview.

The drama recently returned on Sundays on BBC America and the AMC+ streaming service. Episodes repeat on the AMC channel Mondays.

There's two "really brilliant new characters" this season, the producer said, and the welcome return of Camille Cottin as the powerful and well-connected — or more accurately, ill-connected — Helene.

Woodward Gentle was careful to monitor her words: "I spend my whole time getting terrified that I'm going to give away some horrible spoiler, so I don't really know what else I can say."

Oh and Comer dropped a few clues, reinforced by a trailer for the last bow of the series inspired by novelist Luke Jennings' "Codename Villanelle" series.

Eve is "different in the way that she's clearly gained skills, that she's not afraid of violence in herself or inflicting it on others," Oh said of the maverick spy she plays. Her "complete innocence" on display in the show's



Sandra Oh, left, and Jodie Comer in the final season of the drama "Killing Eve." **ANIKA MOLNAR/BBC AMERICA**

first year is gone, the actor said during a Q&A with TV critics.

Eve's nemesis, the emotionally damaged but effective assassin Villanelle, has her own bumpy transformation, Comer said.

"I think she's so desperate to change at the beginning, and I'm not sure that comes from a truthful place. However, when you see this season in its entirety, you really, truly see just how she's done so," she told critics.

The show, praised as an intoxicating female perspective on obsession, cruelty and power with an overlay of dark comedy, earned two Emmy nominations for best drama series and was a boon for its stars.

Oh, a five-time Emmy nominee for her supporting role in "Grey's Anatomy," became the first performer of Asian descent to receive a lead drama actress Emmy bid for the part of Eve. Comer won her first Emmy along with England's counterpart, a BAFTA award.

Fiona Shaw, whose Carolyn slipped from intelligence boss to unhappily relegated to an embassy post, also was Emmy-nominated.

"Killing Eve" is among the well-received

programs produced by Woodward Gentle, among them "The Durrells" and "Any Human Heart." It's the first one she's done primarily led by women in front of and behind the camera.

Phoebe Waller-Bridge ("Fleabag"), Emerald Fennell ("The Crown") and Suzanne Heathcote took turns as lead writer for one season each, with Laura Neal in for the final season. An all-female trio of directors — Emily Atef, Stella Corradi and Anu Menon — handled the last season.

As rewarding as "Killing Eve" proved to be, it was time to bring it to a close, Woodward Gentle said, and one that didn't leave the story or viewers hanging.

"We wanted to do something that honored our characters and something that we planned from the beginning of the writing of season four, which is what we've done," she said.

Were there network pleas to craft an ending that could allow for a "Killing Eve" sequel?

"There was no moment at any point where pressure was put on to either kill people off or to keep them alive. It's always been the perspective of what felt like the right thing to do," the producer said.

HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

Aries (March 21-April 19):

Something in your life might no longer serve you, making this a wonderful time to look around your life and find anything that doesn't belong. You don't need to change overnight, but you could set up a schedule for cleaning out your metaphorical closets.

Taurus (April 20-May 20):

The people you connect with might be up for inspection. If you've been feeling like the people around you don't understand you, then start searching for new faces who make you feel seen. If you're part of a community, consider letting them know you appreciate them.

Gemini (May 21-June 20):

You get to set your sights as high as possible at this time! A fresh burst of energy for your career is heading your way. Bosses may be looking on you more kindly than usual, so step into the spotlight. The more you're willing to roll up your sleeves, the greater the rewards could be.

Cancer (June 21-July 22):

Life is opening up to you in a beautiful way! Whether you decide it's time to head back to school or plan a future adventure, you should incorporate other ways of living and perceptions of the world. This could be the beginning of a vastly different, more satisfying life.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Associated Press

On March 2, 1877,

Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was declared the winner of the 1876 presidential election over Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, even though Tilden had won the popular vote.

**ASK AMY**

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

Parents flummoxed by grandma's behavior

Dear Amy: My husband and I have two boys under the age of 2. We operate a successful business from home, so we only need child care for an occasional break or date night.

We sometimes use a sitter, but our preference is to ask one of the grandparents to watch the children.

My (working) mom is always eager to watch the kids. My (retired) mother-in-law rarely asks to take them, and when she does, often cancels at the last minute. Because of this, we tend to ask my mother to watch the kids more often.

My mother-in-law has let us know how much this upsets her. She's now using social media to "track" when the boys are with my mother. She will show up at our home enraged that we did not ask her to be with the children.

She found out we used our sitter to go to dinner and told us how awful we are for not asking her.

She had broken her hand and foot in the fall the week before; we thought we were doing her a favor!

We've tried explaining, we've told her that her behavior is pushing us away. My husband confronted his mom and it led to an argument. She will not listen to reason and refuses to acknowledge her behavior. Please help!

— *Tired Mom of Two*

Dear Tired:

Some of your mother-in-law's behavior points to problems beyond being difficult or reactive. Regardless, you and your husband have tried the rational approach. It seems that your only remaining option is to actually deliver some consequences.

Despite the way she may perceive her rights, grandparents don't have an automatic right to be with their grandchildren, certainly when both parents are alive, together and making reasonable choices regarding the best interests of their family.

Parents, please agree with the professionals and allow your child to reap the rewards of speech classes to ensure they can speak correctly, maximizing the opportunity for success in their lives.

If your child is tested and has been identified to attend speech classes, don't fret over this but support the eagerness of the teachers to get your child speaking correctly.

— *A NJ Mom*

Dear Mom: I recently talked with a close friend, who told me about her experience with an in-school speech therapist who worked with her for a year to correct an extreme speech problem. Yes, parents — give your children access to this life-changing help!

Dear Amy: I was a little taken aback by your comments to "Sympathy Deserved," who felt no sympathy for anti-vaxxers who have died of COVID-19. What took me aback was the compassion of your answer, and I was surprised to find that I agreed with you. Any death deserves sympathy.

— *Feeling Better*

Dear Feeling Better: Well, my own occasional judgmental attitude has — somewhat surprisingly — led me toward greater compassion.

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Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You've probably been spending more time close to home due to current events than you normally prefer. Look around you for ways to update your surroundings, whether that's moving a few pieces of furniture or even searching out a new home altogether. Some change can do you a world of good.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Chances for change are all around you! It's time for you to speak your mind and let people know what you're about. If you've felt bored recently, get ready to rejoin the world in a safe, enjoyable way. If you do any writing or speaking, your moment to be heard may arrive at any moment.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Questions about your finances might occupy your thoughts. How do you earn your money and what do you do with it? Opportunities to save and spend could both arrive at any time, so start forming a plan of how much you would like to be worth, and how you'll obtain that.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You get your own personal new beginning today! You've got cosmic permission to be selfish. Focus on meaningful aspects of your life and the way you present yourself. Paying attention to your personal and appearance can put you in position to harvest major benefits.

production of CFCs, the synthetic compounds blamed for destroying the Earth's ozone layer, by the end of the 20th century.

In 1939, John Ford's classic Western "Stagecoach," starring John Wayne opened.

1962, Wilt Chamberlain

scored 100 points for the Philadelphia Warriors in a game, an NBA record that still stands.

In 1989, representatives from the 12 European Community

nations agreed to ban all

In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled, 8-1, that a grieving father's pain over mocking protests at his Marine son's funeral had to yield to protections for free speech, favoring the Westboro Baptist Church.

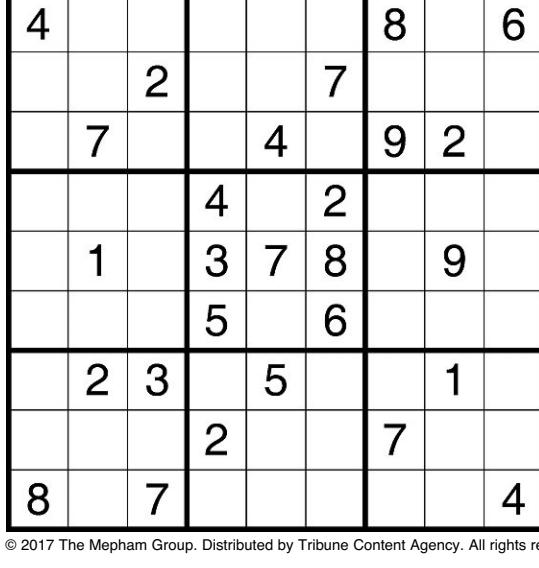
BONUS PUZZLE PAGE

An extra array of word games, search and Jumble. Want more? Play online at PlayJumble.com



Scan QR code to play online.

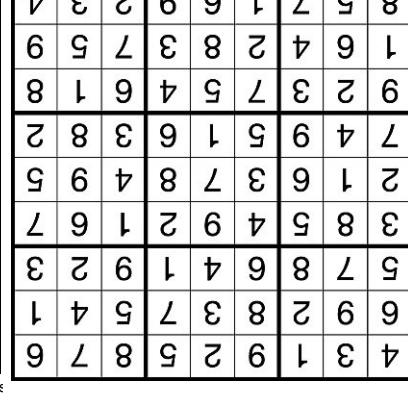
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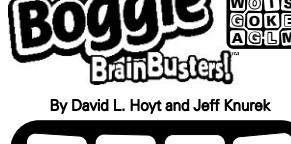
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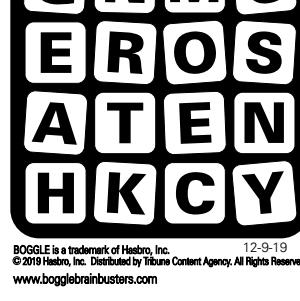
Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.



BOGGLE



By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



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www.bogglebrainbusters.com

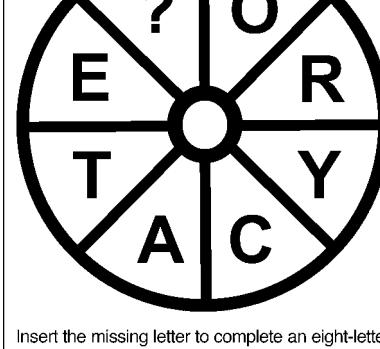
INSTRUCTIONS: Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once in a single word. Print, cut and compare word finds, crossing out common words.

BOGGLE POINT SCALE YOUR BOGGLE® RATING
3 letters = 1 point 151+ = Champ
4 letters = 2 points 101-150 = Expert
5 letters = 3 points 61-100 = Pro
6 letters = 4 points 31- 60 = Gamer
7 letters = 5 points 21- 30 = Rookie
8 letters = 10 points 11- 20 = Amateur
9+ letters = 15 points 0- 10 = Try again

Boggle® BrainBusters Bonus
We put special brain-busting words into the grid of letters. Can you find them?
Find AT LEAST FIVE WORDS RELATED TO MUSIC in the grid of letters.

KEY SONG NOTE: GONGERT HARMONY
12/9/19
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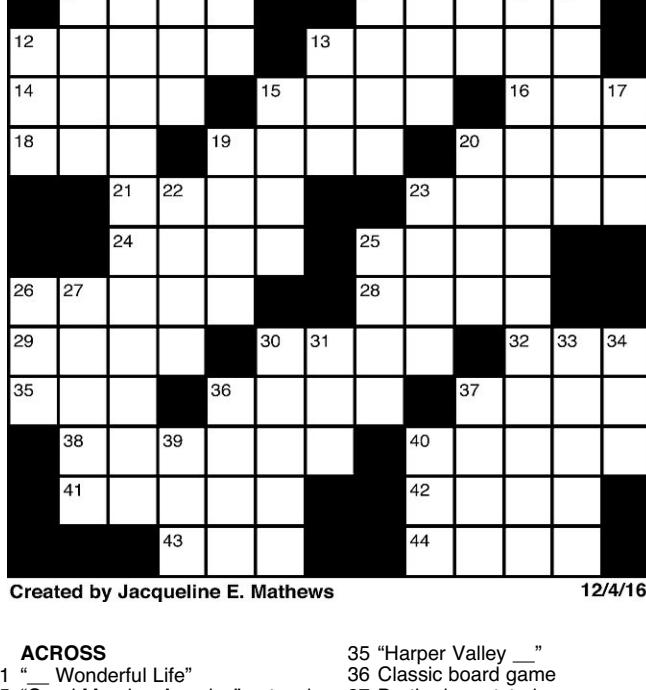
WordWheel



Insert the missing letter to complete an eight-letter word reading clockwise or counterclockwise.
CATEGORY © 2020 Knight Features. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency. 12/12

TV CROSSWORD

by Jacqueline E. Mathews



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/4/16

ACROSS
1 "___ Wonderful Life"
5 "Good Morning America" network
8 "On the Good ___ Lollipop"; Shirley Temple song
9 "___ Girls"
12 On the ball
13 Persuaded
14 "Daddy Long ___"; Fred Astaire movie
15 "Extremely ___ & Incredibly Close"; film for Tom Hanks
16 Pop singer Bobby ___
18 OJ trial judge
19 "Mr. Candid Camera"
20 ___ Tim; man who sang "Tiptoe Through the Tulips"
21 Assn. of oil-producing nations
23 Past, present or future
24 Tyne or Tim
25 Bric-a-___
26 Student
28 Peru's capital
29 ___ be a cold day in hell..."
30 "Duck ___"; Marx Brothers movie
32 Org. for Bucks and Bulls

35 "Harper Valley ___"
36 Classic board game
37 Do the breaststroke, e.g.
38 Oblong pastry
40 Mountaintops
41 "Touched by an Angel" actress
42 Nastase with a racket
43 Suffix for auction or musket
44 Gobbles up

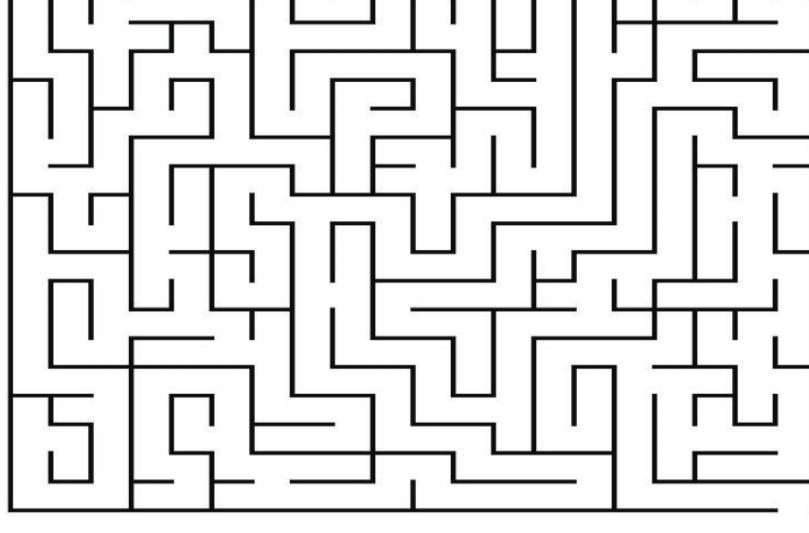
DOWN
1 Tiny bit of land in the sea
2 Ted Danson sitcom
3 Gentlemen
4 Likely
5 "What I Like ___ You"
6 Pitt or Garrett
7 Wally or Courteney
10 Series for Kevin James
11 Actress Barbara and her namesakes
12 Actress MacGraw
13 "___ Air"; film for Nicolas Cage
15 "I Love ___"
17 "Eagle ___"; movie for Shia LaBeouf & Michelle Monaghan
19 Norman of "The Ropers"
20 "The A-___"; George Peppard series
22 Bucket
23 "The Guilt ___"; film for Barbra Streisand
25 "NYPD ___"
26 Printing store chain
27 Say
30 More devious
31 "Days of ___ Lives"
33 Two-wheelers
34 Mornings, for short
36 "Cold ___"; series for Kathryn Morris
37 Actress Ward
39 Pinky or Spike
40 Dessert choice



12/11/16

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KIDNEWS FUN & GAMES



WORD SEARCH

Wordsearch: swim it!

Can you find all the words hidden in the grid? Read backwards or forwards, up or down, or diagonally. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

G K G E K O R T S K C A B W K C I G
P C O J N E L Y T S E E R F S I P W
I I G U Y O V Q H D R A O B Y S L B
T K G D C M I A C L U W X E L U A G
I A L G R S L T A L T C N I F M Y P
U H E E H L E I I I A T D T M B S T
S S S T O L C P C T R E R E M I T A
M S D W T I E K P Y E O N B O Q Z O
I I H S F E E V Q V P P A D D L E L
W V I F D T G N G Z M C M L A N I F
S H O D O K E Y A S E A T O I U Y G
W X M L W X W A R L T D V W C A A N
E M U T S O C T M V I L G O L S X I
S B T R A I N E R V K B E E O H K T
G A V P S M Z C E E C A R Q O O Z A
A T N M C O A C H B O L C X P P F E
L H I U L E N G T H L L B A R M S H
F E H J V Z A A V N C I T U H S G W

ARMS EDGE LANE SHALLOW
BACKSTROKE ENTRY LENGTH SHOP
BALL FINAL MUSIC SLIDE
BATHE FLAGS OFFICIAL SWIMSUIT
BOARD FLOAT FREESTYLE TEAM
CLOCK COACH GOGGLES TEMPERATURE
COMPETITION HEATING HEATING TICKET
COSTUME JUDGE JUMP POOL TIMER
DEEP DIVE KICK RACE TRAINER
KICK WHISTLE WIDTH

306

JUMBLE

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

UDMHI
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VARAL
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FALBEF
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TOLINO
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THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Check out the new free JUST JUMBLE app.
It's so crowded, nobody comes anymore. Really? You're quoting Berra?
2/26
THE CROWDED CHURCH SERVICE WAS —

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

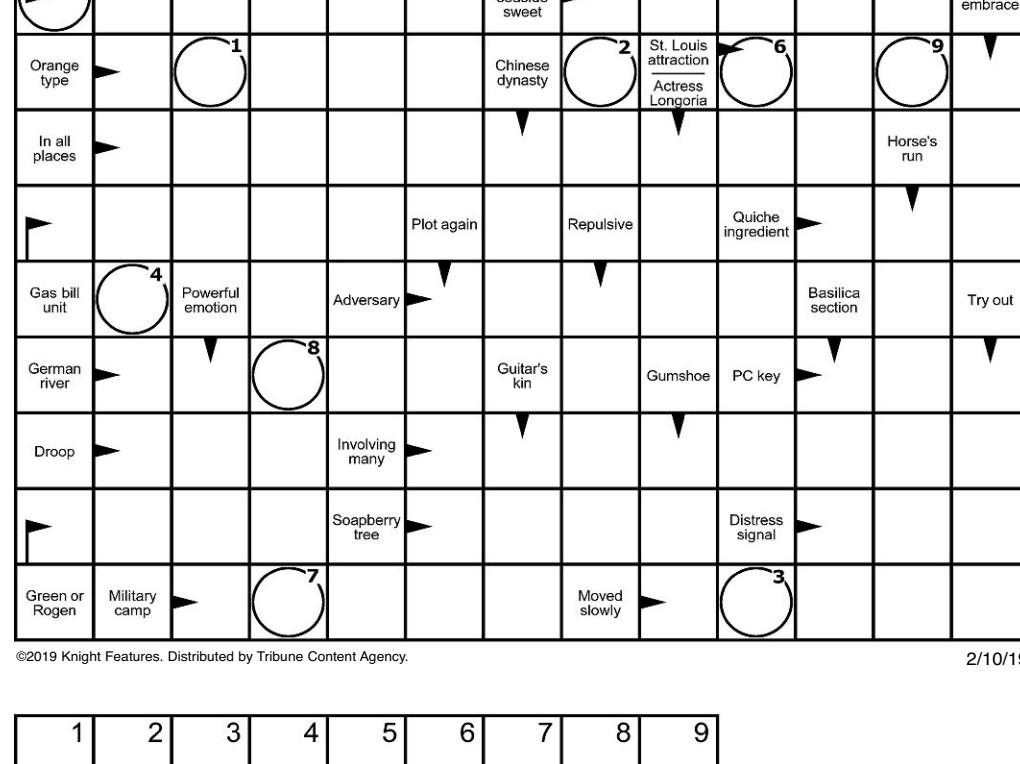
Answer " **FAITH-FULL** " here:

Jumbles: HUMID LARVA BAFFLE LOTION
Answer: The crowded church service was — "FAITH-FULL"

ACROBATIC

ARROW WORDS

Fill in the grid using the clues provided in the direction of the arrows. When complete, unscramble the letters in the circles to reveal a mystery word.



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2/10/19

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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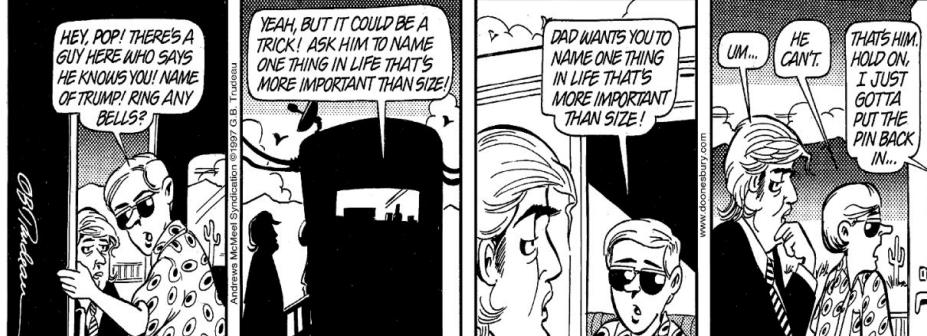
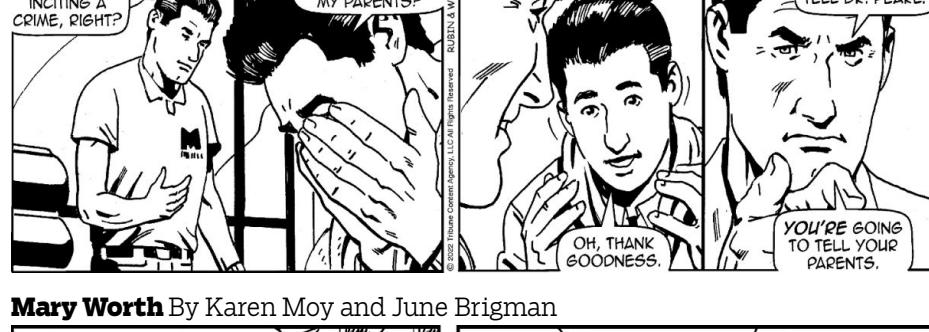
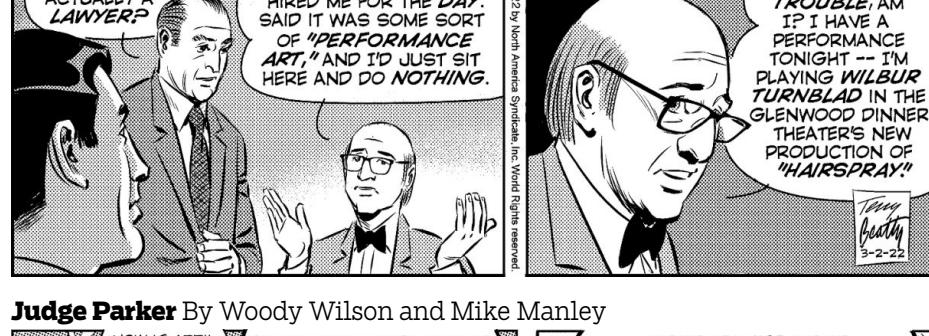
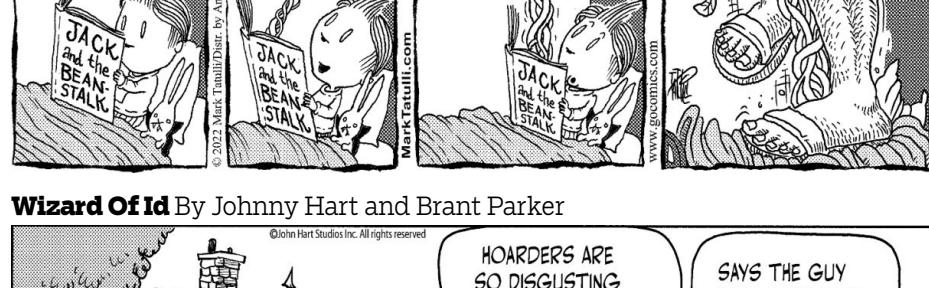
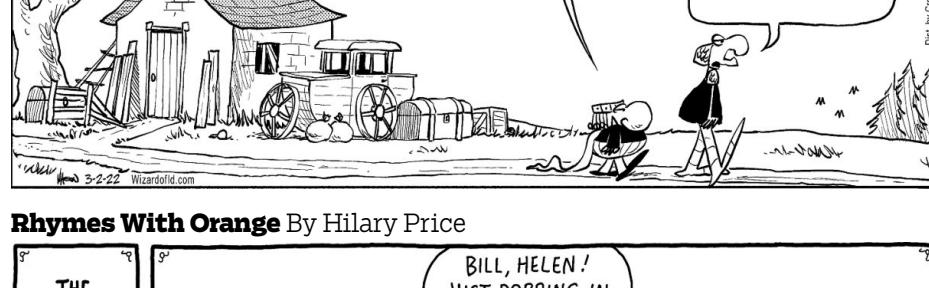
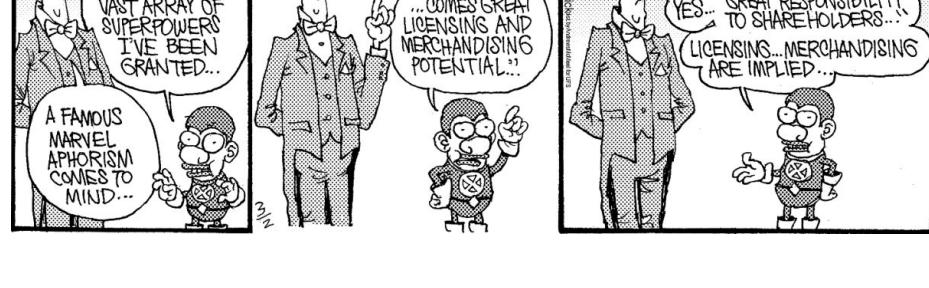
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

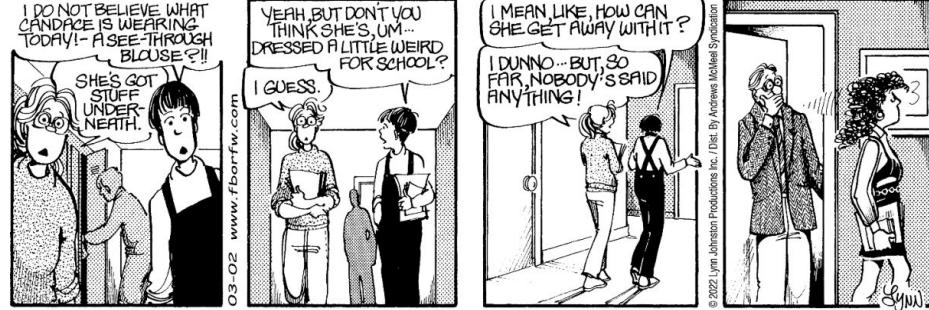
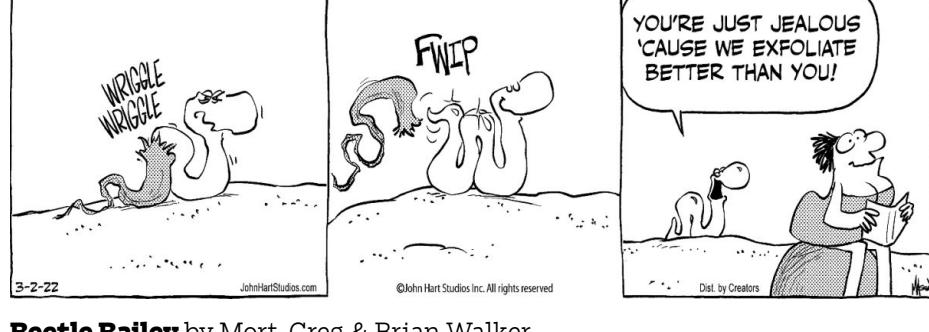
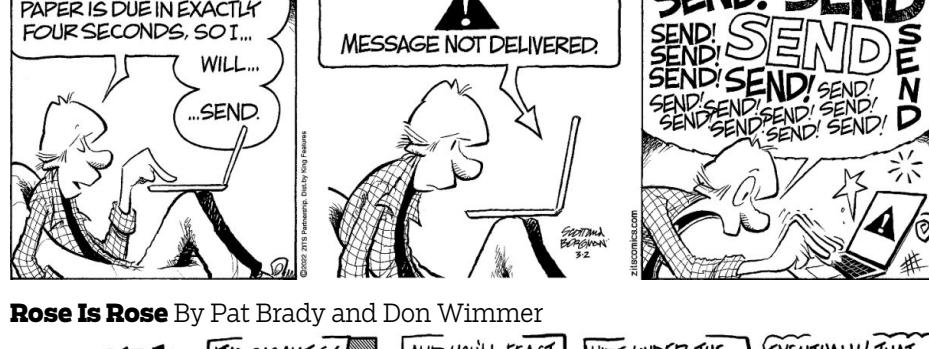
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Peanuts By Charles M. Schulz**Classic Doonesbury** By Garry Trudeau**Garfield** By Jim Davis**Shoe** By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly**Dustin** By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker**Pearls Before Swine** By Stephan Pastis**Mutts** By Patrick McDonnell**Arctic Circle** By Alex Hallatt**Jump Start** By Robb Armstrong**Get Fuzzy** By Darby Conley**Blondie** By Dean Young and John Marshall**Dilbert** By Scott Adams**Gil Thorp** By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin**Mary Worth** By Karen Moy and June Brigman**Rex Morgan, M.D.** By Terry Beatty**Judge Parker** By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley**Baldo** By Cantu and Castellanos**Funky Winkerbean** By Tom Batiuk**Lio** By Mark Tatulli**Wizard Of Id** By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker**Rhymes With Orange** By Hilary Price**Monty** By Jim Meddick

For Better Or For Worse By Lynn Johnston**B.C.** By Hart**Beetle Bailey** by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker**Hi & Lois** By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne**Hagar The Horrible** By Chris Browne**Non Sequitur** By Wiley Miller**Curtis** By Ray Billingsley**Pickles** By Brian Crane**Zits** By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman**Rose Is Rose** By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer**Mother Goose And Grimm** By Mike Peters**CROSSWORD**

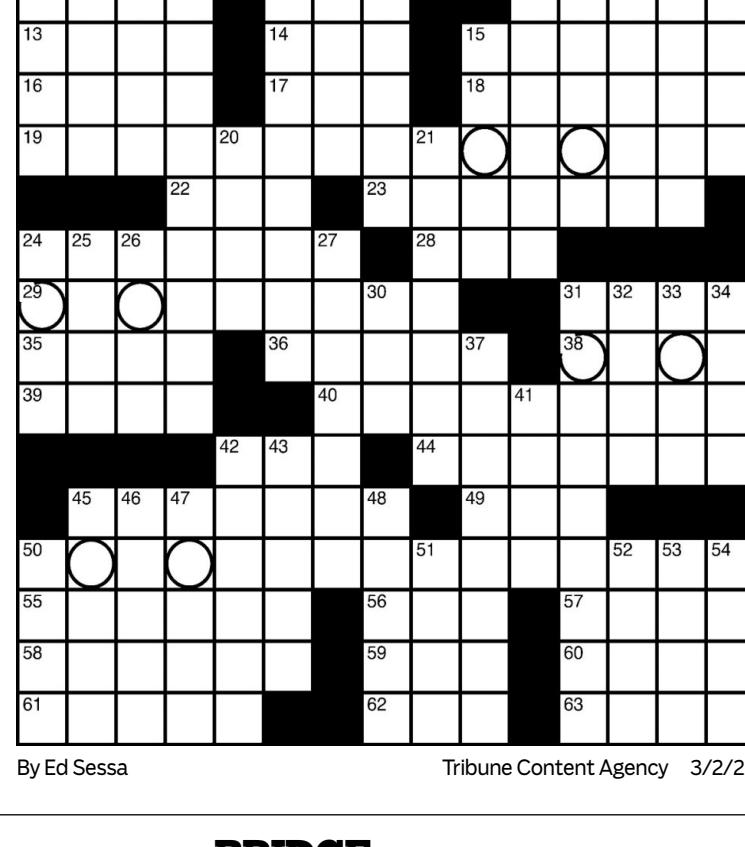
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across

- Animal fat
- Mer, here
- Business entities
- State as fact
- Photo
- Patronize a bistro, say
- Cover for a king
- Onassis, familiarly
- Catskills restaurant job for young Jerry Lewis
- Catskills restaurant job for young Jerry Lewis
- Fluids used for blood typing
- Theater reservations
- Melville sequel to "Typee"
- Rep on the street
- Delay one's decision
- Camera variety, initially
- Fills with passion
- Garment aptly named for where it's worn
- Smack—
- What the filled-in circles do, in a tots' song
- React to with a belly laugh
- New start?
- Inside information?
- Queen of puzzles
- Big name on Wall Street
- To be, to Livy
- “__ what I had in mind”
- Stop on the road
- Some coll. requirements
- Florae counterparts
- “The program's starting!”
- High-tech worker
- Elementary particles
- Lid bump
- Dark wood
- Still-life subject
- Newlywed, at times
- Pear variety
- Lyft competitor
- Really ticked
- Blows a fuse
- Indian lentil dish
- Early hip-hop hardware
- Curt refusal
- Evening in Avignon
- Tipplers
- Demote to the minors

Down

- Mother on Krypton
- Big name in romance fiction
- Civil War soldiers
- Overtook, with “of”
- Kills it on stage
- Auld land
- Essential fatty __
- Host before Carson
- Comic store owner on “The Big Bang Theory”
- Full of fuzz
- Half a Yale cheer
- Range with one end in Kazakhstan
- Philosopher Kierkegaard
- Zuckerberg Media founder Zuckerberg
- Raised on a farm
- Bright light
- Major
- Democratic donkey designer
- Beauty salon supplies



Tribune Content Agency 3/2/22

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH

♦ 9 7 4 3
♥ K 10
♦ A Q 10 6
♣ 9 6 5

WEST

♠ K 8 6 5 2

♥ 5

♦ 7 3

♣ Q J 10 4 2

EAST

♠ Q J

♥ Q 9 8 6 2

♦ 5 4

♣ A K 7 3

SOUTH

♠ A 10

♥ A J 7 4 3

♦ K J 9 8 2

♣ 8

The bidding:

South West North East

1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass

2 ♦ Pass 3 ♦ Pass

4 ♣ Pass 5 ♣ Pass

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

The sure way is the best way

Here is a hand on which it would be very

easy to go wrong.

West led the queen of clubs against five diamonds and continued with a club, ruffed by declarer. South drew two rounds of trump, both defenders following suit, led a heart to dummy's king and the heart ten back to the ace.

When West showed out, South realized he was in serious trouble, but there was nothing he could do about it. He could not ruff all three of his heart losers, since only two trumps were left in dummy, and he also had to lose a spade trick, so he finished down one.

While South was certainly unlucky that the hearts divided 5-1, he nevertheless had a sure way to make the contract. After cashing dummy's king of hearts at trick five and leading the ten, he should have played a low heart from his hand instead of

the ace. Even if the ten lost to the queen, the contract would be 100% certain.

After West took the trick with the queen, South would still have the A-J-7 of hearts on which to discard three spades from dummy and thus assure 11 tricks.

The outcome would be the same if the ten of hearts held the trick, as it would have in the actual deal. There would be no heart losers at all in that case, as South would need to ruff only the J-7 in dummy.

Finessing the ten of hearts could not possibly cost South the contract. In fact, by finessing, he has a slight chance to finish with an overtrick (if East has the Q-x-x of hearts).

More importantly, though, the finesse guarantees the contract beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Tomorrow: Clues and conclusions.**JUMBLE**

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

EWITC

BIRNO

NFLUEN

BMREKA

I'm not sure where these storms will pop up. Could be anywhere.

12-HOUR FORECAST

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app. Follow us on Twitter @BlogJumble

WHEN IT COMES TO WHERE AND WHEN TO CREATE DOWNTURNS, MOTHER NATURE HAS ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print your answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AGILE SWEEP BUNDLE JUNIOR

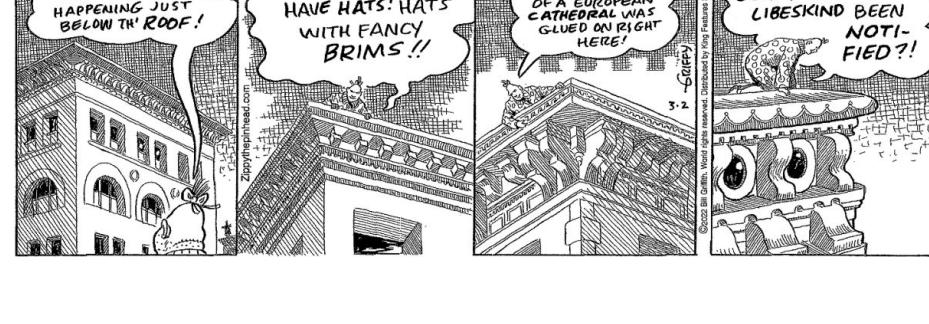
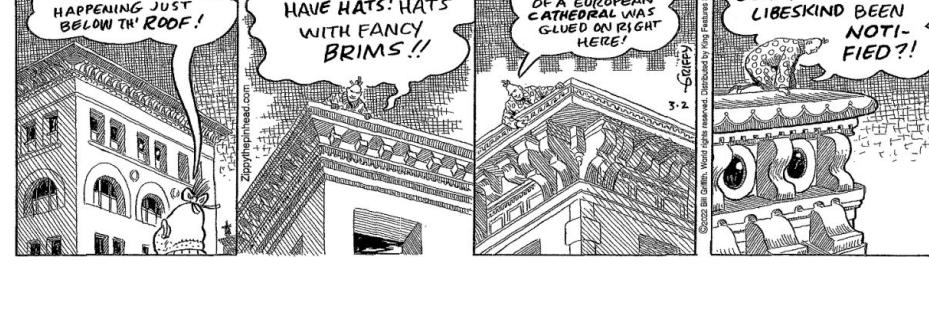
Answer: The construction of the hydroelectric power plant — GENERATED JOBS

TODAY'S SUDOKU

3	4	7	5		8			
				8	7			
						4		
8								
				4				
6					3			
						8		
7				5				
						1		

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box in bold borders contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**

A	R	C	A	D	E	A	S	K	P	O	U	R
L	E	A	P	E	D	P	A	N	O	R	A	M
P	A	R	E	N	T	P	H	O	N	E	T	A
A	S	S	E	T	E	A	X	E	S	T	E	G
C	O	O	K	I	E	J	A	R	S	P	A	R
A	N	N	S	O	D	A	S	I	N	O	T	T
E	L	C	I	D	P	R	E	N	S	E	N	S
L	O	O	K	T	H	E	O	T	H	E	R	Y
A	D	V	I	S	E	N	E	D	S	E	N	S
M	I	E	N	W	A	T	E	R	M	E	B	L
B	E	R	G	S	M	O	N	Y	B	E	L	T
I	T	O	S	T	I	T	O	M	A	N	O	R
S	M	A	R	T	S	E	T	S	C	R	A	P
K	E	M	O	S	A	B	E	R	R	A	N	G
I	N	F	O	R	A	M	A	S	S	E	S	S



Abbott's move not about children's safety



Heidi Stevens
Balancing Act

We're living in a bullying moment, and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott just doubled down.

The governor wrote a letter in February to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services calling on authorities to classify and investigate gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth as child abuse.

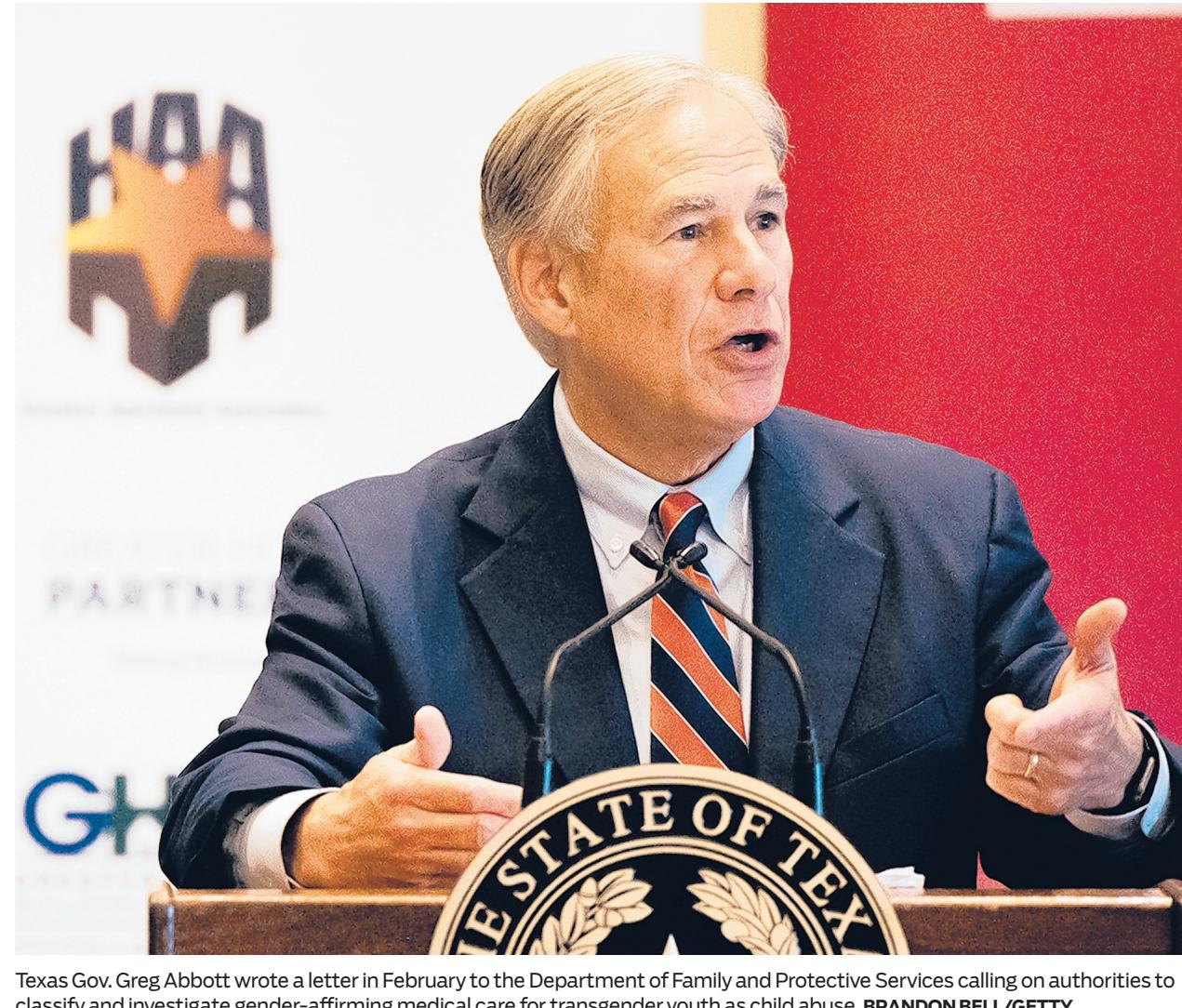
"Because the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is responsible for protecting children from abuse," he wrote, "I hereby direct your agency to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of any reported incidents of these abusive procedures in the State of Texas."

Doctors, nurses, teachers and other licensed professionals who witness youth receiving gender-affirming care and don't report it to authorities are subject to criminal penalties, the letter states.

"Texas law also imposes a duty on DFPS to investigate the parents of a child who is subjected to these abusive gender-transitioning procedures," Abbott writes, "and on other state agencies to investigate licensed facilities where such procedures may occur."

The medical care Abbott is targeting, including puberty-blocking drugs and hormone treatments, have been researched and endorsed by numerous major medical groups. The American Academy of Pediatrics released a policy statement in 2018 promoting acceptance and affirmation of transgender children.

"As pediatricians, we



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott wrote a letter in February to the Department of Family and Protective Services calling on authorities to classify and investigate gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth as child abuse. **BRANDON BELL/GETTY**

base all of our medical decisions around evidence-based guidelines in regards to gender," said Kathryn Lowe, who serves on the AAP Section on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Health and Wellness Executive Committee.

"When it comes to providing gender-affirming health care, the model we follow is a model oriented toward understanding and appreciating each individual youth's experience with gender. Our approach stresses working together with parents, caregivers, mental health professionals, social support services — it's really a collaborative approach."

But Abbott's move has nothing to do with

evidence. Or understanding. Or collaboration.

Or children's safety, for that matter. If it did, Abbott would consider the fact that transgender youth are already at a perilously high risk for suicide and depression before he worked to criminalize their health care.

"Even this discussion, that someone could be reported for child abuse, is already doing incredible harm to many youth and their families and their providers," Lowe told me.

"It scares me to know this is even being talked about. It scares me that there's going to be even greater levels of anxiety and depression and suicide. We have a lot of research

showing that youth who are able to get the affirming medical care they need do a lot better."

The push to criminalize their medical care follows a long line of attempts to stigmatize and dehumanize transgender youth. The AAP, to its great credit, keeps rising to bat them back. In 2021, in response to a rash of bills aiming to keep transgender youth from competing in sports, the AAP released a statement, written by then-President Lee Savio Beers, condemning attempts to further marginalize a group of children.

"The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that youth who identify as transgender have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care that is provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space," the 2021 statement read. "We also recommend that playing on sports teams helps youth develop self-esteem, correlates positively with overall mental health, and appears to have a protective effect against suicide."

"Politics has no place here," the statement continued. "Transgender children, like all children, just want to belong. We will fight state by state, in the courts and on the national stage to make sure they know they do."

But politics have a way of worming themselves into

our most sacred spaces.

And Abbott's move is a cynical exploitation of this particular moment in time — when scientific research and evidence are shouted down by zealots, when medical experts are maligned and ignored, when dogma trumps facts, when the threat of prosecution is wielded to control what books educators teach, which parts of history educators acknowledge, and how much of their students' identity educators can discuss and affirm.

In 2019, it's worth noting, Abbott vetoed a bill requiring children under 2 to ride in a rear-facing car seat, calling it "an unnecessary invasion of parental rights and an unfortunate example of over-criminalization."

Oh, the irony. At the expense of our humanity.

I called Lowe because I wanted to make sure the voices of the experts in this field — the field of medical care for children — were elevated in the discourse around Texas. I wanted to know where the research, not the rhetoric, points us. She ended our interview with a simple plea.

"As a pediatrician, I always like to keep the child or the youth at the center of everything we do," she said.

"I think if we can all focus on the kids here and keep them at the center of the actions we take and decisions we make, that can help us come together and help our kids thrive."

It's a beautiful North Star. I hope it's not obscured in this climate of fear-mongering and bullying.

Heidi Stevens is a Tribune News Service columnist. You can reach her at heidik.stevens@gmail.com, find her on Twitter @heidistevens13 or join her Heidi Stevens' Balancing Act Facebook group.



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Hartford Courant

SPORTS

COURANT.COM/SPORTS

UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Auriemma ready to hit the road

Huskies set to go where Tournament takes them

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

STORRS — The UConn women's basketball team has been to 13 consecutive Final Fours, but Geno Auriemma expects the road to be tougher, or at least require more air miles, than in years past.

The last of three NCAA bracket projections, released Monday night, has UConn as a No. 3 seed in Greensboro, N.C., where top overall seed South Carolina has the No.1 seed. Other sites are Bridgeport, Wichita and Spokane.

"I generally never worry about that stuff," Auriemma said. "The thing I always concern myself with

is that they do it as close to the way the men do it, where they are not really worried about geography, not really worried about how much it cost to fly here to there, within reason. We should go with what the numbers dictate."

In past Tournaments, UConn has been a No.1 seed, often No.1 overall, and after playing the first two rounds on campus, would travel only as far as Bridgeport or Albany for Sweet 16 and Elite 8 games.

"People have always made a big deal about us being in Bridgeport or Albany," Auriemma said, "and how many times have we been No.1 seed? So if the closest place

to your No.1 seed is one of those two places, then they're following their formula. It's not like we were given any special consideration. This year, we're not a No.1 seed and we probably won't end up in one of those places. Big deal. I just don't like when they put a team that clearly is a No. 2 seed and put them as a 1 or a 2 where they don't belong and they say it's because of geography. If you do a traditional S curve, go for it."

Auriemma, after two seasons in the new Big East, has become a fan of his conference rivals and hopes to see four teams, including Villa-

Turn to Women, Page 4



Geno Auriemma and Paige Bueckers could be hitting the road early in the program's quest for a 14th consecutive Final Four. JESSICA HILL/AP

MLB

MLB cancels opening day after sides fail to agree

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

JUPITER, FLA. — Major League Baseball has canceled opening day, with Commissioner Rob Manfred announcing Tuesday the sport will scrap regular-season games over a labor dispute for the first time in 27 years after acrimonious lockout talks collapsed in the hours before management's deadline.

Manfred said he is canceling the first two series of the season that was set to begin March 31, dropping the schedule from 162 games to likely 156 at most. Manfred said the league and union have not made plans for future negotiations, and that players won't be paid for missed games.

"My deepest hope is we get an agreement quickly," Manfred said. "I'm really disappointed we didn't make an agreement."

After the sides made progress during 13 negotiating sessions over 16 1/2 hours Monday, the league sent the players' association a "best and final offer" Tuesday on the ninth straight day of negotiations.

Players rejected that offer, setting the stage for MLB to follow through on its threat to nix opening day.

"Today is a sad day," union leader Tony Clark said. "The reason we are not playing is simple: a lockout is the ultimate economic weapon."

At 5:10 p.m., Manfred issued a statement that many fans had been dreading: Nothing to look forward to on opening day, normally a spring standard of renewal for fans throughout the nation and some in Canada, too.

The ninth work stoppage in baseball history will be the fourth that causes regular season games to be canceled, leaving Fenway Park and Dodger Stadium as quiet in next month as Jeker Merchant Stadium and Camelback Park have been during the third straight disrupted spring training.

"The concerns of our fans are at the very top of our consideration list," Manfred said.

The union said later Tuesday that it will push for canceled games to be rescheduled when talks resume.

"To say they won't reschedule games if games are canceled or they won't pay players for those games that are canceled is solely their position," union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer said of the league. "They're not legally required to take those positions....

Turn to MLB, Page 3

BOYS BASKETBALL CCC SEMIFINAL



Bristol Central's Donovan Clingan lines up a dunk against Windsor in a CCC boys' basketball semifinal game in Enfield on Tuesday. JESSICA HILL / SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

Clingan proves too much again

Bristol Central standout assumes a starring role in romp past Windsor

By Lori Riley
Hartford Courant

ENFIELD — The last time Bristol Central and Windsor played in early February, Donovan Clingan broke his own single-game scoring record with 51 points.

Tuesday night's CCC semifinal game was a bit more subdued.

Clingan had 28 points, 24

rebounds and six blocks as top-seeded Bristol Central (23-0) defeated No. 4 Windsor 57-37 at Enfield High.

Bristol Central will play Northwest Catholic, a 66-50 winner over Conard, in the championship game Thursday at 7 p.m. at Enfield. The Rams are the defending conference champions and have won 38 straight games.

"We knew they were going to change it up," Bristol Central coach Tim Barrette said. "We missed a couple bunnies early. We were 2 of 8 from the line in the first half."

"If we had done a better job in the first half, we should have been up 15, but with that being said I couldn't be prouder to hold a Windsor team to 37 points."

When the two teams played Feb. 10, Bristol Central won 83-67.

Turn to Semifinal, Page 6

UCONN MEN'S BASKETBALL

Bluejay hurdle a tall order

No. 3 seed in Big East tournament on the line against Creighton

By Shreyas Laddha

The UConn men's basketball team heads into the season's final week with plenty to play for.

On Wednesday night at Chi Health Center Omaha, the Huskies play Big East foe, Creighton. It's a big test for a team that hasn't beaten the Bluejays in any of their four games, including a 59-55 loss on Feb. 1 at the XL Center.

No. 18 UConn (21-12-5 Big East) currently sits third in the conference behind Providence and Villanova. Creighton (19-9, 11-6) sits right behind the Huskies at the fourth spot.

UConn comes in having won five straight. A win would put the Huskies in the top three in the Big East tournament field which means an opening-round bye.

Creighton has won three straight home games. If the Bluejays win, they will move past UConn in the Big East standings, clinch a top-five seed in the conference tournament and also receive an opening-round bye. It would also give the Bluejays the head-to-head tiebreaker against the Huskies.

For the Huskies, this will be a significant test on the road against a team that as had success against them, as well as dealing with a loud crowd that usually sells out.

UConn has faced three teams that it lost to earlier in the season: Seton Hall, Xavier and Villanova and they won against each team on the second opportunity.

UConn coach Dan Hurley emphasised the importance of this game.

"Fun atmosphere, big time crowd and a big game," he said. "With Providence wrapping up the regular-season title we have

Turn to Men, Page 4

Up next



UConn at Creighton

8:30 p.m. Wed., FS1

Safety Tip of the Day

Move furniture with sharp corners away from areas where children run around, like hallways and near doorways. If you can't move the furniture, pad its corners with foam or corner protectors.



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SPORTS**UP NEXT**

UConn MBB: at Creighton, Wednesday, 8:30 p.m.; DePaul (Gampel), Saturday, 5 p.m.; Big East Quarterfinal vs. TBD, March 10, time TBD

UConn WBB: Big East

Quarterfinal vs. Providence/Georgetown, Saturday, noon; Big East Semifinal vs. TBD (if necessary), Sunday, 3 p.m.; Big East Final vs. TBD (if necessary), Monday, 8 p.m.

Celtics: Grizzlies, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; Nets, Sunday, 1 p.m.; at Hornets, March 9, 7 p.m.

Knicks: at 76ers, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.; at Suns, Friday, 10 p.m.; at Clippers, Sunday, 10 p.m.

Nets: Heat, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; at Celtics, Sunday, 1 p.m.; at Hornets, Tuesday, 7 p.m.

UConn hockey: Vermont, Friday, 7 p.m.; Vermont, Saturday, 3 p.m.; Hockey East Quarterfinal vs. TBD, March 12, time TBA

Bruins: at Knights, Thursday, 9 p.m.; at Blue Jackets, Saturday, 7 p.m.; Kings, Monday, 7 p.m.

Rangers: Blues, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.; Devils, Friday, 7 p.m.; at Jets, Sunday, 7 p.m.

Wolf Pack: Belleville, Wednesday, 7 p.m.; Hershey, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Bridgeport, Sunday, 3 p.m.

ON AIR**BASKETBALL**

12 p.m.: Women's College SEC Tournament -- Vanderbilt vs Texas A&M. (Live) SEC

2:30 p.m.: Women's College SEC Tournament -- Auburn vs Alabama. (Live) SEC

6:30 p.m.: Xavier at St. John's. (Live) FSI

7 p.m.: Georgia Tech at Clemson. (Live) ACC

7 p.m.: Texas A&M at Alabama. (Live) SEC

7 p.m.: Georgetown at Seton Hall. (Live) CBSSN

7 p.m.: Notre Dame at Florida State. (Live) ESPN2

7 p.m.: Western Kentucky at Marshall. (Live) ESPNU

7:30 p.m.: New York Knicks at Philadelphia 76ers. (Live) ESPN

8:30 p.m.: Connecticut at Creighton. (Live) FS1

9 p.m.: Miami at Boston College. (Live) ACC

9 p.m.: Auburn at Mississippi State. (Live) SEC

9 p.m.: Marquette at DePaul. (Live) CBSSN

9 p.m.: LSU at Arkansas. (Live) ESPN2

9 p.m.: Wichita State at Tulsa. (Live) ESPNNU

10:05 p.m.: Portland Trail Blazers at Phoenix Suns. (Live) ESPN

10:30 p.m.: Wyoming at UNLV. (Live) FSI

2 a.m.: New York Knicks at Philadelphia 76ers. (Same-day Tape) ESPN2

GOLF

2:30 p.m.: Women's College 2022 Darius Rucker Intercollegiate, Final Round. (Live) GOLF

9:30 p.m.: HSBC Women's World Championship, First Round. (Live) GOLF

5 a.m.: DP World Tour Golf Magical Kenya Open, First Round. (Live) GOLF

HOCKEY

12 p.m.: New York Islanders at Colorado Avalanche. (Taped) NHL

2 p.m.: Edmonton Oilers at Philadelphia Flyers. (Taped) NHL

3 p.m.: San Jose Sharks at Vegas Golden Knights. (Taped) NHL

7 p.m.: Abbotsford Canucks at Toronto Marlies. (Live) NHL

7:30 p.m.: Buffalo Sabres at Toronto Maple Leafs. (Live) SPRTNET

7:30 p.m.: St. Louis Blues at New York Rangers. (Live) TNT

10 p.m.: Nashville Predators at Seattle Kraken. (Live) TNT

11 p.m.: Nashville Predators at Seattle Kraken. (Live) SPRTNET

LACROSSE

4:30 p.m.: Army at Syracuse. (Live) ACC

SOCCER

12:25 p.m.: Deutsche Pokal Soccer Hannover 96 vs RB Leipzig. (Live) ESPNNU

12:25 p.m.: Italian Serie B Soccer Lecce vs Ascoli. (Live) FSP

2:50 p.m.: Women's Soccer CONCACAF U-20 Championship -- Guyana vs Panama. (Live) FSP

3 p.m.: FA Cup Soccer Liverpool FC vs Norwich City. (Live) SPRTNET

3 p.m.: Italian Super Cup Soccer Juventus vs Fiorentina. (Live) CBSNN

5 p.m.: Italian Serie B Soccer AC Monza 1912 vs Pa.m.. (Same-day Tape) FSP

7:20 p.m.: Copa do Brazil Soccer Ferroviaria vs Vasco. (Live) FSP

10 p.m.: 2022 South American Women's U17 Championship Paraguay vs Bolivia. (Same-day Tape) FSP

KNICKS

Randle, Barrett have not good pair

When together, they've have been outscored by 174

By Stefan Bondy
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Late in that last game Sunday afternoon, the Sixers rolled out the same play on repeat, the James Harden-Joel Embiid pick-and-roll, and simply pounded the Knicks.

Over and over.

It was a lesson in a team's two best players generating a reliable and effective maneuver in crunch time. Easy stuff. No frills. On the other side of the court, RJ Barrett and Julius Randle dribbled a lot and produced little. The Knicks were outscored, 19-4, in the final seven minutes.

It became the latest example of a larger trend with Barrett and Randle, who this season are an overwhelming net negative when sharing the court.

Tom Thibodeau, when asked how to promote better production from his Big-2, brought it back to the Sixers.

"I think you see it with most teams are going to have three guys," Tom Thibodeau said. "In some cases, you look at Philadelphia you can add [Tobias Harris] into that mix with Embiid and Harden. That's how you have to play, play off each other."

"You see it with all the teams in the league. It's very rare — you don't even see it anymore — where it's one guy. If you can get two committed to the ball, that's how you create good offense



RJ Barrett (9) of the New York Knicks is consoled by teammate Julius Randle (30) after Barrett is called for a technical foul in the second quarter against the Charlotte Hornets at Madison Square Garden on May 15 in New York. ELSA/AP

in the fourth quarter. Put Embiid and Harden in a pick and roll or dribble handoff, they put a lot of pressure on you. And you have to react from there. So, that's probably the biggest thing."

Any comparisons to Harden and Embiid, who the Knicks again face Wednesday night in Philadelphia, are obviously unfair. These are two of the NBA's greatest offensive forces, and Harden is a ballhandler/playmaker of another stratosphere.

But if the Knicks intend to build a team around Barrett

and Randle, it's significant that they've been so awful as a tandem. They tend to take turns, rather than play off one another, and only scored at least 20 points each in seven games this season. The disconnect is further reflected in the advanced statistics.

Barrett and Randle have logged 1,418 minutes together this season, and they've been outscored by 174 points. They've produced a -6.8 net rating, which has only gotten worse (a -9.9 rating over their last 11 games).

They have New York's worst net rating of any two-man group that has logged more than 900 minutes together. Among the top-50 two-man groups in the NBA in minutes played, Randle and Barrett own the 49th worst net rating, ahead of only Washington's Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Kyle Kuzma.

Barrett dismissed those statistics Tuesday, citing their success last season.

"I didn't know that, I didn't know that stat coming in. But I think also, some of that stat is, you're also going

up against the other team's best players every night," Barrett said. "You start so you're on the court, for the most part, with the best players all the time. Him and I have, we've been able to play together, we've been able to win together, get to the playoffs together. So I think, I don't look into that too much."

It was indeed a different story last season, when the Knicks outscored the opponents by 120 points with Barrett and Randle on the court together. But the contrast is so stark now, and Thibodeau curiously tried to blame it on the injuries to Derrick Rose.

"It's different. That's probably the biggest reason," he said. "But we have to do better, we know that."

In the short term, this isn't such a big deal. The Knicks have plummeted to four games out of the final play-in spot, wasting away a season that was supposed to represent another step forward for the franchise. With 21 games remaining, they've already clinched a worse winning percentage than last season.

Meanwhile, Barrett becomes eligible for a contract extension after the season, which is also when Randle's max extension kicks in.

If the two aren't compatible, it's a waste of resources and years to give them the majority of the salary cap as a tandem.

Should the ugly evidence this season be a good judge? Barrett doesn't think so.

"I don't look into that too much," he said.

YANKEES

Voit, Torres waiting, hoping to get back to work

By Kristie Ackert
New York Daily News

Yankees were scheduled to open the season on the road at Texas and then go to Houston.

TAMPA, Fla. — Luke Voit kept his phone close Tuesday, checking it after a workout with other big leaguers at a local high school. Gleyber Torres said they were just waiting for news. Both Yankees were cautious after the union and owners seemed to make progress in the labor negotiations to end the lockout on Monday night. They were wistful to be back at the complex and working out with teammates, but cautious about an actual deal.

"I hope they can get it done," Torres said. "We were already supposed to have a few (spring training) games. We're ready to go, we just want to get back and play."

"But there are things they have to work on."

The negotiations were going on about 200 miles south of here, but Voit and Torres said that they had been kept well informed throughout this entire process. That ramped up when the negotiations finally kicked into high gear last week with meetings every day.

Jameson Taillon, who was in Jupiter with the players' negotiating team earlier this week, was in Tampa working out with a large group of players on Monday. The Yankees' right-hander gave them all an update and an idea of what it was like in the negotiations.

"It was really good to

hear that from him," Voit said. "We've had (Taillon), (Zack) Britton and Gerrit (Cole) there and they've all done a good job of communicating what's been going on."

The owners locked the players out on Dec. 2 after the previous collective bargaining agreement expired.

Torres felt that firsthand when his routine from October through November of working out at the Bombers' player development complex with new hitting coach Dillon Lawson was abruptly ended and he was forced to find other accommodations.

The lockout was supposed to create a sense of urgency in the negotiations, but it took 43 days for the league to make its first proposal. The league's

kicks in on March 31 when players begin to collect paychecks. Many of the owners do not really begin to make money on games at the gates until the summer and then they really cash in during the playoffs.

The logistical deadline for starting the regular season on time was already being pressed. Spring training is usually six weeks, mostly to ramp up pitchers. In 2020, after a nearly four-month shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic, the teams had a three-week summer camp, which many believe was the cause of so many injuries that year.

Most players, like Voit and Torres, have kept up as much of their usual spring routine as possible without the help of team personnel. They feel it is reasonable to be ready in four weeks

whenever a deal is struck.

"I think we're more ready," Torres said of players being prepared compared to 2020. "We've been doing pretty good workouts already. I think we could do it."

Voit agreed that four weeks is enough spring training, even for some of the pitchers he's seen during the local workouts.

So far, Voit has seen Jameson Taillon and Clay Holmes, who threw to live hitters on Monday and Severino, who had hitters tracking pitches on Tuesday.

"I am sure guys would like more time," Voit said, "but these guys are throwing off the mound already, throwing (batting practice). For me, for us, I think we need 30 or so at-bats to be ready. So I think it could happen."

CELTICS

In virus protocols, Nets' Nash reported in good spirits

By Kristian Winfield
New York Daily News

the interim coach said. "He's just bummed that he can't be with us."

Vaughn said he didn't know any specifics, but that Nash suggested he was asymptomatic.

"When I talked to him, he was in good spirits," he said. "He didn't intimate any other symptoms. But overall, he was feeling okay."

Per the NBA's health and safety protocols, Nash must register two consec-

utive negative COVID test results in two days to exit the protocols. Otherwise, he will have to serve six days in the protocols before returning to the sidelines: a target return date of March 5 and back to leading the Nets for their March 6 matchup against the Boston Celtics — one of two games (the other being Thursday's matchup against the Miami Heat) targeted for Kevin Durant's injury return.

Vaughn said Durant's

status is not impacted by Nash's entry into the protocols. The head coach said the Nets' MVP would not play in either of the back-to-back matchups against the Toronto Raptors but is likely to play in one of the two subsequent games on the schedule.

"The Steve update that he gave you guys, he did not tell me anything differently," Vaughn said. "And so the last update he gave me about Durant's injury return.

Vaughn said Durant's

continue to abide by that."

Vaughn also deferred to Nash on questions about Ben Simmons, the obscure offensive fit who is set to make his Nets debut some time later this month.

"The great thing is that Steve will be in health and safety protocols for just a certain amount of days, and he'll be able to handle those questions, Kristian," the interim coach said. "I'll be by his side in case he needs any advice from me."

SCOREBOARD

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE								
ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA	GB
Florida	53	35	13	5	75	218	161	
Tampa Bay	51	34	11	6	74	177	144	
Toronto	53	35	14	4	74	197	152	
Boston	53	32	17	4	66	158	142	
Detroit	53	23	24	6	52	156	191	
Ottawa	51	19	27	5	43	135	161	
Buffalo	54	16	30	8	40	143	195	
Montreal	53	13	33	7	33	123	198	
METRO.	53	13	33	7	33	123	198	
GP W L OT PTS GF GA	52	37	11	4	78	182	122	
Carolina	52	37	11	4	78	182	122	
Pittsburgh	55	33	14	8	74	178	148	
NY. Rangers	53	33	15	5	71	157	134	
Washington	55	28	18	9	65	176	156	
Columbus	53	27	21	5	55	175	193	
NY. Islanders	49	20	21	8	48	125	137	
New Jersey	53	19	25	5	43	164	193	
Philadelphia	52	16	26	10	42	131	181	
WESTERN CONFERENCE								
CENTRAL	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA	
Colorado	53	39	10	4	82	213	150	
St. Louis	52	32	14	6	70	188	141	
Minnesota	50	31	16	3	65	190	157	
Nashville	53	30	19	4	64	163	151	
Dallas	52	29	20	3	61	151	151	
Winnipeg	53	23	21	9	55	155	162	
Chicago	54	19	27	8	46	134	185	
Arizona	53	14	35	4	32	122	195	
PACIFIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA	
Calgary	51	31	14	6	66	177	124	
Los Angeles	54	29	18	7	65	159	153	
Vegas	53	29	20	4	62	172	156	
Edmonton	53	29	21	3	61	176	171	
Anaheim	55	25	21	9	59	161	169	
Vancouver	56	26	23	6	58	154	158	
San Jose	53	24	23	6	54	142	165	
Seattle	55	16	34	5	37	140	196	
NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.								

TUESDAY'S RESULTS

Edmonton at Philadelphia, late
New Jersey at Columbus, late
Ottawa at Tampa Bay, late
Carolina at Detroit, late
Calgary at Minnesota, late
Montreal at Winnipeg, late
NY. Islanders at Colorado, late
Boston at Anaheim, late
San Jose at Vegas, late

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

Buffalo at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
St. Louis at NY. Rangers, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Nashville at Seattle, 10 p.m.

THURSDAY'S GAMES

Carolina at Washington, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Florida, 7 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Vancouver at NY. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Boston at Vegas, 9 p.m.
Colorado at Arizona, 9 p.m.
Montreal at Calgary, 9 p.m.

FRIDAY'S GAMES

Detroit at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at NY. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
Vegas at Anaheim, 10 p.m.

MONDAY'S RESULTS

New Jersey 7, Vancouver 2
Toronto 5, Washington 3
Boston 7, Los Angeles 0

GOALTENDING LEADERS

VICTORIES	TM	W	L	OL
Frederik Andersen	CAR	29	7	2
Andrei Vasilevskiy	TBL	28	8	4
Sergei Bobrovsky	FLA	26	6	3
Tristan Jarry	PIT	26	11	6
Darcy Kuemper	COL	26	6	2
Juuse Saros	NSH	25	16	3
Igor Shesterkin	NYR	25	6	3
Jacob Markstrom	CGY	24	11	5
Jack Campbell	TOR	23	8	4
Thatcher Demko	VAN	23	16	2
Robin Lehner	VEG	19	13	1
Cam Talbot	MIN	19	11	1
Mikko Koskinen	EDM	18	8	2
Elvis Merzlikins	CBJ	18	14	1

through Monday

TENNIS

WTA LYON OPEN

At Palais des Sports Gerland, Lyon, France, hardcourt outdoor

WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 32

Caroline Garcia d. #1 Camila Giorgi, 5-7, 6-4, 6-0.

#2 Sorana Cirstea d.

Mariam Kalvadze, 6-3, 6-1.

#7 Sorana Cirstea d.

Vera Zvonareva, 6-0, 6-3.

#8 Zhang Shuai d. Kristina Mladenovic, 7-6(3), 7-5.

Arantxa Rus d. Danka Kovinic, 6-2, 6-0.

Martina Trevisan d.

Elisabetta Cocciaretto, 6-3, 6-2.

Dayana Yastremska d. Ana Bogdan, 3-6, 7-6(7), 7-6(7).

Tamara Korpatsch d. Oceane Dodin, 6-3, 1-6, 6-2.

WTA ABIERTO MONTERREY

At Club Sonoma, Monterrey, Mexico, hardcourt outdoor

WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 32

Anastasia Potapova vs.

#1 Elena Svitolina, late

Petra Martic d. #3 Madison Keys, 5-7, 7-6(3), 6-3.

#6 Nuria Parrizas Diaz d.

Misaki Doi, 6-2-6-1.

Xinyu Wang d. #8 Ann Li, 6-2, 6-1.

Qinwen Zheng d. Lucia Bronzetti, 6-2, 6-3

Wang Qiang d. Dafna Galf, 6-7(0), 6-1, 6-4.

Marie Bouzkova d. Sara Errani, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Harmony Tan d. Renata Zarazua, 6-0, 1-0, retired.

Seone Mendez vs. Mayar Sherif, late

ODDS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL WEDNESDAY

FAVORITE LINE UNDERDOG

at Cleveland off (off) Charlotte

at Orlando 2 (23) Indiana

at Philadelphia 10% (224) New York

at New Orleans 5 (236) Sacramento

at Utah 1% (23%) at Houston

at Milwaukee off (off) Miami

at Denver off (off) Okla. City

at Phoenix 12% (228) Portland

NHL WEDNESDAY

FAVORITE LINE UNDERDOG LINE

at St. John's (NY) 1 Xavier

at Louisiana Tech 8% Old Dominion

at La Salle 1 St. Joseph's (Pa)

at Geo. Wash. 6 Duquesne

at UMass 3 Fordham

Western Kentucky 2% at Marshall

at Iowa State 3 Oklahoma State

Middle Tennessee 1% at Charlotte

at Clemson 8% Georgia Tech

at Davidson 7 George Mason

Notre Dame 1% at Florida State

at Alabama 9% Texas A&M

Saint Louis 3 at Rhode Island

at Tennessee St. 3 SU-Edwardsville

UAB 18 at Southern Miss

UConn 5 at Creighton

Wichita State 2 at Tulsa

Miami 5 at Boston College

at Maryland 6 Minnesota

at New Mexico St. 2 at F. Austin

Auburn 3 at Mississippi State

Marquette 1% at DePaul

at Arkansas 5% LSU

Tennessee Tech 10% NC State

Tennessee Tech 2 at Austin Peay

at Cal Baptist 13 Chicago State

MEN'S BASKETBALL
Wednesday: at Creighton, 8:30 p.m., FS1

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Saturday: vs. Providence/Georgetown, noon, FS1

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MEN'S BASKETBALL NO. 11 VILLANOVA 76, NO. 9 PROVIDENCE 74

Associated Press

VILLANOVA, Pa. — Caleb Daniels scored 20 points, Eric Dixon had 15, Collin Gillespie 14 as No. 11 Villanova beat No. 9 Providence 76-74 in a fantastic Big East matchup Tuesday night.

The Big East regular-season champion Friars (24-4, 14-3) and Wildcats could not shake the other over the final furious minutes.

Providence's A.J. Reeves hit a long 3-pointer that brought the Friars within 62-60. Justin Moore hit a 3 for Villanova, and that was answered by one from Providence's Jared Bynum.

Shot for shot they went down the stretch, a fitting sneak peak of what's ahead in March.

With Providence trailing by

four, Nate Watson picked up his fourth foul with 2 minutes, 35 seconds left in the game on a charge that sent furious coach Ed Cooley on the court to argue.

Justin Minaya buried a 3-pointer with 32 seconds left that pulled Providence within 69-68.

The Wildcats (22-7, 15-4) survived Providence's press and sealed the win from the free-throw line.

Bynum scored 19 points for the Friars.

The Friars won their first Big East title without beating Villanova. The Wildcats won two weeks ago in Providence, Rhode Island, and entered this one a 10-point favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

The Big East champion ship tipped toward Providence

after the team had three games canceled because of COVID-19 protocols. The Friars had three straight games wiped out in mid-January at Creighton and Seton Hall and against Connecticut. UConn and Seton Hall were both ranked this season.

So, who knows? The home finale for Villanova could have been for the Big East title.

While another Big East title for Villanova coach Jay Wright would have been nice, the true measuring stick for the program is what lies ahead — note the two national championship banners won on his watch.

The Friars and Wildcats could meet again next week in New York at the Big East Tournament. Those games will mean more for the NCAA tourney, where earn-

ing at least a No. 3 seed in the East Regional could keep the Wildcats in line for Sweet 16 and Elite Eight games in Philadelphia.

The Friars trailed by 14 early but showed their championship mettle on the road to open the second half. They hit six straight 3s to start, and Noah Horchler buried his fourth of the game to bring Providence within four.

Bynum hit a tough basket in the paint off a turnover and followed with a pull-up jumper that tied the game 48-all. Gillespie and Justin Minaya kept the game tied — and whet the appetite for a potential rematch next week in New York.

Daniels scored eight straight points and Justin Moore hit a 3 for a 62-57 lead that gave the Wildcats just the breathing room they needed down the stretch.

COMMENTARY

Mickelson might not have time he needs

Associated Press

Phil Mickelson was one of the louder voices on the Ryder Cup Task Force that reshaped the American blueprint and created so much continuity it was easy to predict the next captain.

Zach Johnson, a four-time Ryder Cup player and a vice captain on the previous two teams, is the choice for the 2023 matches in Italy.

That was easy.

The next choice for Bethpage Black in 2025 should have been just as predictable, except that now it isn't.

All signs had pointed to Mickelson.

Never mind that Mickelson is a six-time major champion who has been part of every Ryder Cup team since 1995, before Collin Morikawa was even born. New York loves Mickelson despite — or maybe because of — his five close calls in the majors, two of them at Bethpage.

But now?

Lovable Lefty has an entirely different reputation.

Becoming golf's oldest major champion at age 50 by winning the PGA Championship now seems a lot longer than nine months ago. Fresh on the mind are his comments to longtime golf writer Alan Shipmuck, who is writing an unauthorized biography on Mickelson.

While flirting with a Saudi-funded rival league, Mickelson referred to the Saudis as "scary mother(expletives) to get involved with."

"We know they killed (Washington Post reporter Jamal) Khashoggi and have a horrible record on human rights," Mickelson was quoted as saying. "They execute people over there for being gay. Knowing all of this, why would I even consider it? Because this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape how the PGA Tour operates."

He also said he didn't care if the rival league succeeded as long as it provided him leverage against the "dictatorship" of Commissioner Jay Monahan and the PGA Tour.

If that wasn't enough, Mickelson said he and three other top players paid attorneys to write the operating agreement for the rival league.

Four of his corporate partners — KPMG, American Express, Amstel Light and Workday — no longer want to work with him. Callaway Golf said it was pausing the relationship.

As for the Ryder Cup?

Johnson was prepared for the topic when he was introduced as captain on Monday. The four times he was asked about Mickelson as a vice captain, or the threat of the Saudi league Mickelson has promoted, Johnson offered a vague response about unknowns and hypotheticals.

Repeatedly asked about Mickelson in a Sky Sports interview, Johnson offered little more than to say without elaboration, "Phil Mickelson is a friend of mine."

The last anyone has heard from Mickelson was a 500-word statement a week ago that only made him look more self-absorbed. The statement contained the words "apologize" once and "sorry" twice. He never mentioned Monahan or the PGA Tour. He said his only motivation was for the good of the game and the players, even if it meant being the fall guy.

It was a fall, all right.

Mickelson mentioned the pressure and stress of the last 10 years and said that he "desperately" need time away. And that's the problem as he tries to recover from the mess he created.

Time is what Mickelson doesn't have.

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

'Set me up for life': Athletes stash NIL cash

Associated Press

A figure sprints toward the camera along a walkway at an apartment complex, first in real time, then in slow motion before going back to real time. The woman is dressed in a tracksuit, she's fast and the spoken word-song playing over the video says "it's me against me."

More than 20,000 people have viewed this Eastbay-sponsored TikTok post on Kentucky sprinter and hurdler Masai Russell's account, and 2,000-plus engaged with it. It's just one of several name, image and likeness deals sending a good chunk of change in Russell's direction since July.

She said she "loves the camera" and loves being able to "reap the

benefits of what I love to do on a daily basis outside of track."

Russell and a growing number of female college athletes are making a name for themselves on social media and cashing in under the NCAA's interim policy covering athlete compensation by serving

up a range of looks: serious business on the court, laid-back casual at home, approachably confident, slinky, sexy coed.

Whether their self-run social media profiles are more wholesome or risqué, they're embracing the power of their image, hoping it brings attention not just to their sport and themselves but also financial independence after college.

"We can't play forever and we have to have something to fall back on. The ball stops bouncing at some

point," North Carolina sophomore basketball player Deja Kelly told Associated Press. She said she has six NIL deals, including Dunkin' Donuts, Outback Steakhouse and a couple yet to be announced, and some of the deals have equity partnerships.

"... (D) it's a generational opportunity, it'll set me up for life," Kelly said. "If I were to stop playing basketball in five years, I would be fine because all the things I'm setting up now and I'm focusing on now."

West Coast Conference Commissioner Gloria Nevarez said she believes that NIL deals soon will matter less about an athlete's alma mater as they build a brand that will last beyond the final year of eligibility.

"And I hope it's not just the attractiveness category," Nevarez said, "but because I'm very skilled in the sport or because I happen to have a (clothing) line or code programming at a really high level that you're going to start to get more of that engagement."

It's hard to ignore the attractiveness factor for some female athletes landing big deals.

The Barstool Athletics Instagram page, which features its NIL athletes and has more than 200,000 followers, featured posts with 46 women and 11 men over the span of a recent month. Beautiful Ballers, a brand that aims to "inspire women to believe that being an athlete doesn't diminish your beauty," features female athletes for its 468,000 followers on Instagram.

Women

from Page 1

nova, Creighton and DePaul, go to the Big Dance.

"I think our conference is undervalued," he said. "I don't know that there are a lot of teams in the country that would like to play Villanova as a seven seed. Or Creighton and DePaul. They've been beating up on each other; if that were some other conference, they would say, 'that goes to show the strength of the conference.' If the Big East tournament plays out according to the seedings, I'd be disappointed if we didn't get four teams. How do you keep Villanova

out? They've got one of the best players in the country [Maddie Siegrist]."

ESPN bracket analyst Charlie Creme has Villanova (21-7, 15-4) and DePaul (22-9, 14-6) among his first four teams out, with only UConn and Creighton (20-8, 15-5) in from the Big East.

The Huskies (22-5) went 16-1 in the Big East to win the regular season title. They lost to Villanova in February, ending a 169-game winning streak in conference play. UConn went undefeated throughout its seven years in the American Athletic Conference.

"Not even in the same ballpark," he said, comparing the two conferences. The quality of

play, the intensity level that exists, because there is something to be said for knowing you're at a school that really values basketball. Not that other schools don't, but you know it's all about football."

Since ending the regular season Sunday, UConn has had two days of practices and everyone has come out healthy. Paige Bueckers, who returned from her 10-week recovery from knee surgery, has had only the normal soreness. UConn next plays in the Big East quarterfinals Saturday at noon.

Wherever UConn lands in the NCAA Tournament, they'll be a dangerous lower seed with all their players back — if the pieces fit together.

"When you bring somebody in at that level, Azzi [Fudd] and Paige, they've got to be the kind of players that want to blend in seamlessly and don't want to come in and go, 'let me pick up where I left off,'" Auriemma said. "This isn't the same team they left. This isn't the same team Paige left [on Dec. 5], and in my mind, I think she's happier because of that, because she feels we have more ways to win now. So if I were playing a team like ours, I would be anxious to see, does this elevate them, or does this disrupt what they've been doing?"

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com

Men

from Page 1

to play for other things. Closing out the regular season, there's not many teams in the country at least Power-five plus the Big East that have the chance to have seven losses or less."

Hurley knows the key to victory is sticking to their identity, something the Huskies failed to do in the first game against Creighton.

"The most mature teams, the most successful teams, they understand who they are this time of year," he said. "They play to their identity and roles. It all starts on the defensive end for us, then it goes to the backboard. Those are the two areas where we build our identity and culture around."

Hurley wants to end the season on a high note.

"We've got to win as much as we can, he said. "We want to take care of the week and go to New York with a ton of momentum. And if we have a great week, it's obviously gonna put us in a better position for better seeding. It just increases your chances of being able to advance."

After being taken out for a possible concussion against Georgetown, Jordan Hawkins practiced on Tuesday and should be available to play on Wednesday.

The basics

UConn vs. Creighton

Site: Chi Health Center Omaha, Nebraska

Time: 8:30 p.m., Wednesday

Series: Creighton leads 4-0

Last meeting: Creighton won, 59-55, on Feb. 1, 2022, at XL Center.

TV: FS1 (Kevin Kugle, Nick Bahe)

Live Stream: Fox Sports app

Radio: UConn Sports Network (Mike Crispino, Wayne Norman).

X-M-201. Sirius-138. SXM app-964. 97.9-ESPN Hartford.

WILI-1400-AM (Willimantic).

WATR-1320-AM (Waterbury).

WAVZ-1300-AM (New Haven).

WGCH-1490-AM (Greenwich).

Creighton (19-9, 11-6 Big East) probable starters, sixth man

Ryan Hawkins, F, 6-7, Sr.; Alex O'Connell, G, 6-6, Sr.; Ryan Kalkbrenner, C, 7-0, So.; Arthur Kaluma, F, 6-7, Fr.; Trey Alexander, G, 6-4, Fr.; Rati Andronikashvili, G, 6-4, Fr.

No. 18 UConn (21-7, 12-5) probable starters, sixth man

R.J. Cole, G, 6-1, GS; Isaiah Whaley, F, 6-9, GS; Adama Sanogo, F, 6-9, So.; Tyrese Martin, G/F, 6-6, Sr.; Andre Jackson, G/F, 6-6, So.; Jordan Hawkins, G, 6-5, Fr.

The matchup

UConn offense: UConn needs to be smarter with its shot selection overall as they shot 30% from the field in its previous game against Creighton.

UConn defense: The Huskies will have to be more physical than the Bluejays while ensuring they don't let Hawkins get hot. They also need to take advantage of the Bluejays' turnover issues (14.4 turnovers per game) and use those to start fastbreak opportunities.

Creighton offense: Hawkins leads the team in scoring, as he averages 14.3 points per game. Last time against UConn, he had 23 points on 8-for-12 from the field.

Creighton defense: The Bluejays do a great job of playing good defense without fouling, as they are No. 4 in Division 1 in opposing team free throw rate with 20.4, according to KenPom.

UConn's key: Play inside-out through Sanogo and don't let Creighton outrebound or play with more physicality on the glass.

Player to watch: Sanogo. He struggled with foul trouble against Georgetown, so the big focus should be on keeping him on the floor and out of foul trouble as much as possible.

About Creighton's coach: Greg McDermott. He coached Creighton to its first Big East title in 2019-20.

Creighton's mascot: The Bluejay, was chosen in 1923.

Creighton famous alumni: Former NBA player Paul Silas

Shreyas Laddha can be reached at sladdha@courant.com or at [@shre98](https://twitter.com/shre98) on Twitter.

Did you know?

NATIONAL SPORTS REPORT

SHORTS

Shoulder surgery set for Garoppolo



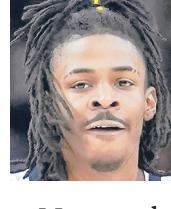
49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo is undergoing offseason surgery, but not for the thumb injury that forced him to miss a Week 17 game against the Texans. According to a report from ESPN on Tuesday, Garoppolo will have shoulder surgery to repair an injury suffered in the 49ers' wild-card victory over the Cowboys. Ahead of the divisional round matchup with the Packers, 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said Garoppolo sprained his shoulder. Garoppolo will resume throwing around July and that his trade status isn't expected to be impacted by the procedure. It's widely anticipated Garoppolo will be traded this offseason and a deal can officially be completed March 16, which is the start of the new league year. The 49ers can still agree to a deal to move Garoppolo within the next two weeks, but no trade can be completed until the quarterback's trade exemption officially expires. Garoppolo, 30, threw for 3,810 yards with 20 touchdowns and 12 interceptions during the 2021 regular season and went on to lead the 49ers to the NFC championship game.

Baffert files suit vs. Churchill Downs



Bob Baffert has sued Churchill Downs and track leadership in federal court, seeking to overturn the embattled Hall of Fame trainer's two-year suspension on grounds it violated his due process rights. The suit was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court. The historic track in Louisville, Kentucky, suspended Baffert in 2023 and cited a recent spate of failed drug tests by his horses including now-deceased colt Medina Spirit after he won the Kentucky Derby. A postrace drug test revealed the corticosteroid betamethasone in his system, which is allowed in Kentucky but prohibited on race day. Kentucky racing stewards last week disqualified Medina Spirit and handed Baffert a 90-day suspension and \$7,500 fine. Churchill Downs recognized runner-up Mandala as winner soon after. Kentucky Horse Racing Commission director Marc A. Guilfoil on Friday denied the trainer's request to stay the suspension. Baffert and his representatives have argued that the steroid in Medina Spirit came from the topical ointment Otorax, rather than an injection that is banned.

Morant scores career-high 52 points



Ja Morant threw down a massive dunk over 7-footer Jakob Poeltl and scored a career-high 52 points, lifting the Grizzlies over the visiting Spurs 118-105 on Monday. The arena was still buzzing from Morant's fast-break slam late in the second quarter when Steven Adams delivered a length-of-the-court pass to Morant, who caught it mid-air and flipped in a buzzer-beater from the left baseline for a 68-58 halftime lead. Morant also hit a 3 from near the logo with the shot clock running down, creating a load of highlights from a memorable night. "Got to be the 50 (points)," Morant said when asked what was most memorable, adding: "I'm thankful for my teammates, my coaches. They believe in me and have all the confidence in the world that I'll make the right plays." Morant added 13 consecutive points during the fourth to break the game open. Morant's performance was the first 50-point game in Grizzlies history. "He's a beautiful player," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said of Morant. "... You combine the cerebral part of his game with his athleticism and you've got a special kid." —News services



Then-Auburn WR Darius Slayton jumps before running the 40-yard dash during the 2019 NFL combine in Indianapolis. AP FILE

NFL

Brand new game plan

Combine gets makeover but future in Indy uncertain

By Michael Marot
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — This week's stodgy, old NFL scouting combine is going Hollywood.

The sound of silence will be replaced by music as players work out inside. Results and interviews will appear on Lucas Oil Stadium's video boards and fans will be encouraged to cheer.

Whether all these changes signal a dramatically different future for the league's second-biggest offseason event remains unclear.

But after a one-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic, draft prospects, scouts, coaches and team officials are returning to Indianapolis one more time — perhaps the final time.

"I think the owners of clubs would love to bring a tent-pole event to their town from a fan standpoint, from an economic standpoint," said Jeff Foster, president of National Football Scouting, which runs the combine. "When they moved the draft to different cities and it took off, I think that's what sparked the interest and that's why we started looking at it."

The moving debate has raged for years, though this time seems different.

There's an expiring contract, the league's well-known desire to move big events around the nation, and three cities — Dallas, Indianapolis and Los Angeles — vying to host the event in 2023 and 2024. Final bids are due in early April and Foster anticipates an announcement in late May.

But team executives have long thought Indy was the perfect spot.

The city has hosted every combine since its inception in 1987 for many reasons, including Indy's covered walkways, which allow players to attend workouts, medical exams and team interviews without needing a car or navigating traffic. Plus, they can find restaurants and entertainment without even going outside.

That's not the case everywhere.

"If we do move to another city, it will be really difficult for us, especially that first year because it can be a real challenge to accomplish all the things we're used to in the same amount of time," Foster said. "The medical piece is the biggest challenge from a logistical standpoint."

If the last few years have taught Foster anything, it's that the only certainty is change.

In 2020, the combine was one of the last major American sporting events held before the pandemic struck. Last year, the event was replaced on the schedule by players' individual pro days. This year started with agents threatening to have players boycott the workouts and interviews because of proposed health restrictions on players' support staff. Many top players skip the workouts anyway.

That boycott was averted last week when medical experts agreed to loosen the initial guidelines adopted earlier this winter and recently revised because of the dwindling number of COVID-19 cases.

Organizers have made other changes, too.

They eliminated the psychological testing, which shortens players'

schedules by one day. They're hoping to reduce wait times for medical exams with another alteration, and players will do bench press and workouts on the same day after some complained the day-after soreness impacted their workout results.

League officials also have threatened to punish teams for asking inappropriate questions during interviews.

What fans will see is a new environment for the prime-time workouts.

League officials are offering up to 10,000 tickets to put fans in the stadium's lower bowl for the first time, separated from scouts. The league averaged 7,800 over four days in 2019 and 2020.

A DJ will blare music during warmups and play softer music during the drills. Food and beverages, including beer, will be sold and two in-stadium hosts will keep the crowd revved.

"We want to make it a bit more of a fan-friendly environment," NFL event contact and presentation coordinator Katie Conklin said. "The most important thing is keeping the integrity of the combine for the players and scouts, and we want to make it more exciting for the fans."

It also could help league officials determine whether a more glitzy atmosphere would play better in Dallas or Los Angeles — or if Indy has what it takes to host a combine with flair.

"I think logically, there are a lot of things that separate (Indianapolis) from other cities," Foster said. "When it comes to managing an event with this many moving pieces, I'm certainly biased because of our partners, relationships and history here."

AP writer Arnie Stapleton contributed.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Sanctions mount against Russia

By Graham Dunbar and James Ellingsworth
Associated Press

GENEVA — More and more sports are following the appeal of the International Olympic Committee and banning Russian athletes from competing in the wake of the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia was barred from competing in international ice skating, skiing, basketball, track, and some tennis events Tuesday, a day after being kicked out of soccer competitions and hockey — Vladimir Putin's favorite team sport. The decisions follow the IOC's request to international sports federations to keep Russian athletes out of events they organize.

The International Skating Union, the body that runs the sport around the world, said no athletes from Russia or Belarus "shall be invited or allowed to participate" in events until further notice.

Belarus has been a key ally of Russia in its attack on Ukraine.

The world figure skating championships are scheduled for later this month in Montpellier, France. The ISU decision means Olympic champion Anna Shcherbakova and 15-year-old teammate Kamila Valieva, who was the focus of a still-unresolved doping dispute at last month's Winter Olympics, will be excluded from the competition.

The restrictions have drawn criticism from Russia.

Russian and Belarusian tennis players including top-ranked Daniil Medvedev, who's Russian, can play on the ATP and WTA tours, but without national flags, and at the Grand Slams. The countries are barred from team competitions like the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup until further notice. Russian players won both last year and are already qualified for this year's finals as defending champions.

In Norway, Russian cross-country skiers — who won 11 medals at the Beijing Olympics — were heading home after being excluded from competition by the International Ski Federation, known as FIS.

The decision came after a three-day standoff with Norwegian ski officials, who said they would refuse to let Russians and Belarusians race if FIS maintained its previous policy of allowing them to compete as neutral athletes.

"Firstly, I am glad that FIS has taken this decision," said Norwegian ski federation president Erlend Røste, who also sits on the governing body's ruling council. "Then I have to be honest and say it has taken too long."

In track and field, Russia has been suspended since 2015 for doping violations but allowed to compete as "Authorized Neutral Athletes." On Tuesday, the sport moved to a blanket ban on Russia and Belarus.

The governing body of track is run by Sebastian Coe. As an athlete, Coe defied calls to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics because of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and won a gold medal in the 1,500 meters.

"I have railed against the practice of politicians targeting athletes and sport to make political points when other sectors continue about their business," Coe said. "This is different as governments, business and other international organizations have imposed sanctions and measures against Russia across all sectors. Sport has to step up and join these efforts to end this war and restore peace. We cannot and should not sit this one out."

Russia was suspended by the International Basketball Federation. That will hit Russia's bid to qualify for next year's men's World Cup. Russia already had one qualifying game against the Netherlands called off last week. The Russian women's team has qualified for a place at the World Cup in September.

The International Volleyball Federation stripped Russia of hosting the men's world championships in August. Volleyball also suspended Russian teams and clubs from international events, while rowing, badminton, canoeing and triathlon decided to exclude Russian athletes from their competitions.

Other sports like swimming, cycling and auto racing haven't followed the recommendation from the IOC to ban Russians.

Swimming's governing body, known as FINA, said Tuesday it would allow Russian and Belarusian swimmers to take part as neutrals, competing under the FINA flag and with the FINA anthem.

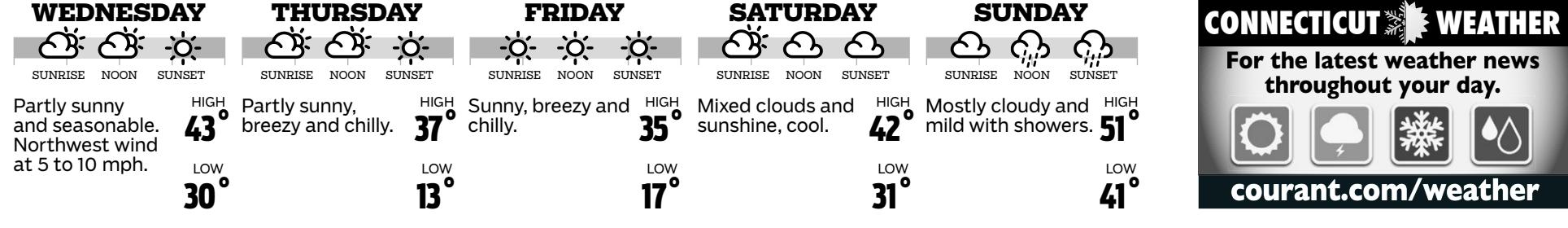
Russia is hosting the world short-course championships in December. FINA said it had withdrawn a federation honor awarded to Putin in 2014.

Cycling will allow Russian riders to compete as neutrals but will bar Russian and Belarusian teams and sponsors. Auto racing's international body, the FIA, said Russian drivers like Nikita Mazepin can still compete but a block on having cars in national colors would stop Mazepin's team Haas bringing back the Russian flag-stripe livery it removed during last week's testing. The Russian Grand Prix was cut from the calendar on Friday.

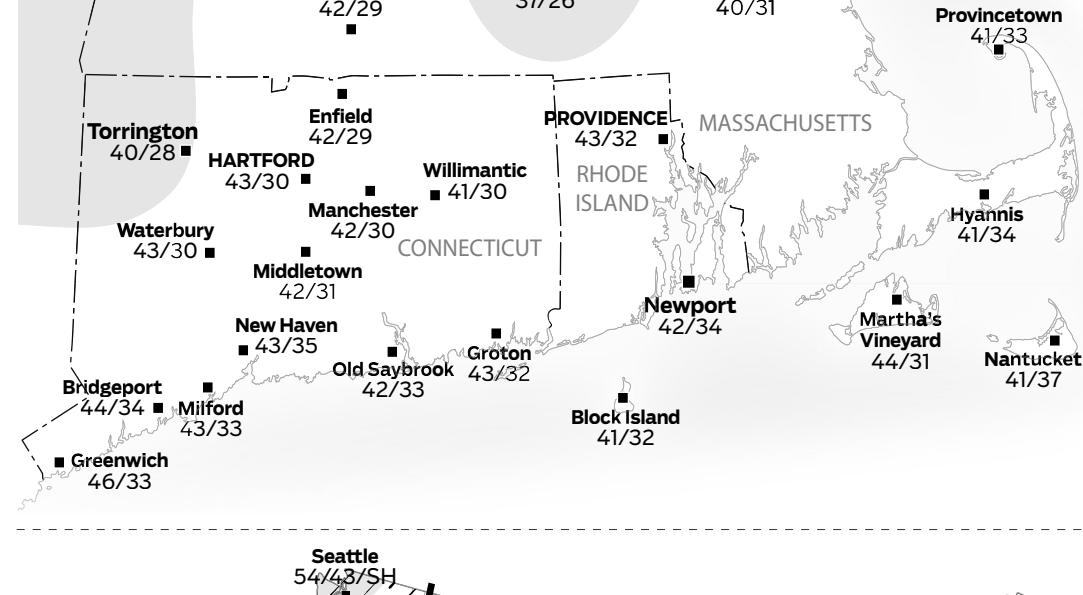
Russian athletes have already arrived in China for the Winter Paralympics, which open Friday. They're scheduled to compete as RPC, short for Russian Paralympic Committee, after the IOC offered a possible exemption for events starting at short notice. The Ukrainian team isn't yet in Beijing, but organizers said they expect the country's athletes to arrive in time.

AP writers Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Rob Harris in London contributed.

WEATHER



YOURCAST



AROUND THE WORLD

Today's forecast in cities not included in the maps above:

NEW ENGLAND		WORLD		NATION	
Bangor	37 18 PC	Baltimore	59 40 PC	Nashville	71 47 S
Burlington	33 15 C	Bismarck	28 11 C	New Orleans	72 49 S
Caribou	30 5 C	Boise	56 35 C	New York	48 38 PC
Concord	41 20 PC	Buffalo	38 16 C	Omaha	77 43 S
Montpelier	30 13 C	Charleston	76 51 S	Orlando	80 57 PC
Mt. Wash.	9 -9 C	Cincinnati	60 39 PC	Athens	50 36 C
Portland	40 21 PC	Cleveland	41 24 C	Pittsburgh	47 27 C
Woods Hole	45 30 S	Indianapolis	58 33 PC	Bangkok	97 81 PC
		Jacksonville	79 45 S	Raleigh	71 49 S
		Las Vegas	80 54 PC	Salt Lake City	59 38 PC
		Miami Beach	77 71 PC	Beirut	70 61 C
		Milwaukee	41 21 C	Paris	79 63 S
		Atlantic City	52 38 S	Berlin	46 28 PC
				Bermuda	68 61 SH
				Jerusalem	68 52 C
				Johannesburg	77 63 T
				Singapore	91 75 T

KEY: S Sunny, C Cloudy, PC Partly Cloudy, R Rain, SH Showers, SN Snow, SF Snow Flurries, T-Tstorms

Semifinal

from Page 1

Damion Glasper added 14 points for Bristol Central, which led 30-22 at halftime. Clingan had 15 points. He picked up his third foul with 2 minutes, 23 seconds left in the third quarter and the Rams leading 36-27 and went to the bench.

Windsor (18-4) went on an 8-2 run to end the quarter, fueled by six points from Tyler Betsey, who led the Warriors with 20 points and was the only Windsor player in double figures.

They trailed 38-33 heading into the fourth.

But Clingan came back in the fourth and Windsor managed to score only four points in the quarter.

"I feel like we adjusted to how they played and they adjusted to how we played," Clingan said. "Our defense was great. We held them to [four] points in the third quarter. We just knew in order to win this game we had to play defense. Fourth quarter we locked up and came out with the victory."

The difference between the two games, Windsor coach Ken Smith said, was "we didn't allow [Clingan]

30 more points."

"We just didn't come out and score like we should have," he said. "We just didn't score. I don't know what it was. Maybe we were tight because of the hype of the game, but that's not their fault; that's my fault."

Northwest Catholic 66, Conard 50: Matt Curtis had 22 points and second-seeded Northwest Catholic went on a 15-0 run in the third quarter to break open the second CCC semifinal game at Enfield Tuesday.

Conard's Riley Fox (20 points) tied the score at 29 with a basket going into halftime. But the Lions

came out and scored 15 straight points to give Northwest a 44-29 lead.

"At halftime, we were able to make some adjustments and just changed the mental focus," Northwest coach John Mirabello said. "The defense picked up and we were able to make some plays."

London Jamison had 17 points for Northwest and Gianni Mirabello and Badara Diakite each added 11. Jalen Hamblin led No. 3 seed Conard with 22 points.

Lori Riley can be reached at lriley@courant.com.



Bristol Central's Victor Rosa (3) strips the ball from Windsor's Tyler Betsey (10). **JESSICA HILL/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT**

MONDAY'S LATE HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

CIAC State Tournaments

Class LL—First Round

Upper Bracket

MANCHESTER 45, NEWTOWN 33

MANCHESTER (9-12): Madison Boillard 1-0-3, Sanai Worrell 2-3-8, Tiara Tyson 4-11-19, Mia Gilbert 1-0-2, Elise Ryar 1-2-5, Olivia Westfort 0-3-3, Alaysha Bell 0-4-4. Totals 9-23-45.

NEWTOWN (16-5): Macey Cuomo 3-2-8, Chloe O'Connor 3-1-7, Jenna Lagan 0-1-1, Bridget McCleary 1-3-6, Isabella Gerace 1-0-3, Isabelle Caron 1-2-4, Alexandra Bradley 2-0-4. Totals 11-9-33.

M; 12; 8; 10; 15; -45

N; 8; 8; 10; 7; -33

GREENWICH 43, CONARD 40

CONARD (13-10): Callie Cosgrove 6-0-13, Emily Knowles 10-21, Tatiana Harrison 1-0-2, Courtney McPhee 1-0-3, Emilia Santiago 0-1-1. Totals 18-14-40.

GREENWICH (13-8): Sophia Sergio 0-3-3, Carolyn Frankle 5-6-18, Camila Jablonski 2-3-7, Kristin Riggs 1-2-4, Kelly Martyanov 4-1-9, Kayla Anderson 1-0-2, Totals 13-15-43.

C; 9; 8; 14; -40

G; 7; 6; 22; -43

Class LL—First Round

Upper Bracket

KENNEDY 64, KENNEDY 11

KENNEDY 1 (0-2): Mia Washington 2-0-6, Kamaria Az-ibn 1-0-2, Me'Kayla Caraballo 1-0-3, Maddie Kieran 0-0-0, Mya Caraballo 0-0-0. Totals 4-0-11.

E.O. SMITH 46, BRISTOL EASTERN 45

BRISTOL EASTERN (8-13): Talgar Parent 1-0-3, Emily Piendak 1-0-2, Ciara Collins 4-6-14, Janessa Gonzalez 8-2-18, Emma Stavans 3-0-8. Totals 17-8-45.

BETHEL 46, BRISTOL EASTERN 45

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BETHEL 46, BRISTOL EASTERN 45

BRISTOL EASTERN (8-13): Talgar Parent 1-0-3, Emily Piendak 1-0-2, Ciara Collins 4-6-14, Janessa Gonzalez 8-2-18, Emma Stavans 3-0-8. Totals 17-8-45.

BETHEL 46, BRISTOL EASTERN 45

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